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extreme PlayStation MAGAZINE

BIGGEST ISSUE!

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Issue 5 May 98

FULL SOLUTION

DEATHTRAP Dungeon

REVIEWED:

TEKKEN 3
MOTORHEAD
PREMIER MANAGER 98
RASCAL
GHOST IN THE SHELL
BUSHIDO BLADE 2
XENOCRACY
CARDINAL SYN
SPAWN
GEX 3D: ENTER THE GECKO
TENCHU
WAYNE GRETZKY HOCKEY
ALUNDRA
NBA FASTBREAK 98

PLATINUM:

FORMULA 1
PANDEMONIUM
ISS PRO
ADIDAS POWER SOCCER
MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY

REVIEWED TEKKEN 3

FULL SOLUTION

RESIDENT EVIL 2

Quay MAGAZINE PUBLISHING A QUALITY PUBLICATION

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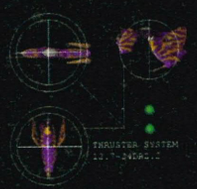
WINDOWS 95

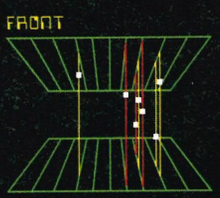
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Editorial

Popped over to LA last week, and while in a public convenience I met a man who had a nicotine patch on his bum. Very weird! He said he was trying to give up fags. I recognised the face, but couldn't place the name.

Anyway, if you hadn't noticed you're holding the biggest issue so far of extreme PlayStation. From now on, every issue will be at least 132 pages and will be packed with an array of goodies. This extravagant installment sees Deathtrap Dungeon at the bargain price of £29.99; this wondrous offer is only available to our readers. In addition, there's a £7000 Lucky Luke watch give-away. You can't buy them in this country (they're only available in France) and they cost twenty quid each! Want one? Simply fill out the postcard; it's even a freepost address, so you don't even have to fork out for a stamp. Nice! Included in the 132 pages is our new import section. Here, we review some of the bigger titles available in Japan and America. This issue sees Namco's eagerly-awaited Tekken 3, SquareSoft's swordfest Bushido Blade 2 and Sony's gut-wrenching Tenchu. Sayonara

Darren



Highlights



D'you want some then? Eh? Eh?

The fighting is again fierce and deadly with no quarter asked and none given between the three high-impact beat-'em-ups reviewed this month. Hot from the land of the Rising Sun there's the massive Tekken 3, of course, accompanied by Bushido Blade 2, the swift follow-up to the classy cold steel and Samurai original. Stabbing them laughingly in the back, though, is the gore-geous Cardinal Syn, an extremely spiky rival in the violent swordplay stakes. Expect fists (and limbs) to fly...

My Old Man said be an Arsenal Fan...

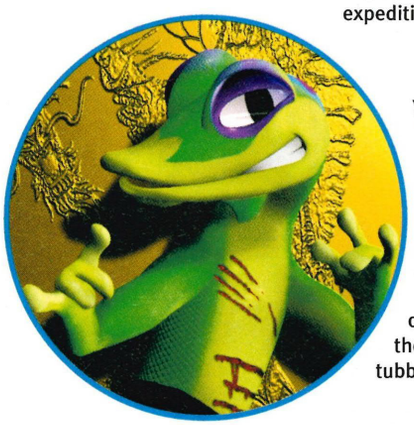


With the World Cup approaching like a juggernaut with a bad mullet, there are eight separate football-based games featured in this issue, spanning the old, the new and the as yet unfinished. We review Gremlin's Premier Manager '98 on p76, Ron, and it's definitely our pick for Man of the Match. Let's just hope it doesn't start going out with a Spice Girl.

Greased Lightnin', woah, Greased Lightnin'



Speed is of the essence again here at EPM as the petrolheads among you will be pleased to hear. There's a five-page Gran Turismo showcase (p20) that drip-feeds some more tantalising images to those of you that are quite rightly slavering for it, while in the meantime there's the excellent Motorhead, a thundering velocity-stallion of a game that strips paint with its highly-extreme expeditions (p46).



Well-Heeled Platforms

We've got two big platform-style titles locking horns in the reviews section, Rascal from Psygnosis (p50) and Gex 3D: Enter the Gecko via BMG. Cutting edge graphics abound, but which one makes it across the yawning gap, and which one falls into oblivion? Check out our balanced and thoughtful assessments for the answer. Blue hedgehogs and tubby water pipe technicians need not apply.

This is a Journey into Sound



The often cringeworthy but sometimes sublime world of in-game music comes under scrutiny by our very own Saul 'Two Decks' Trewern, who trawls through the archives of tunes both modern and ancient to unearth the gems of aural bliss. He talks to producers DMA and checks out the best PlayStation top ten computer ditties that soothe the shell-likes as you twitch yer thumbs. Slam dunk it over to page 40 for a full rundown, pop pickers.

Contents

GAMESPOTTING

HARDBALL 6 10
DUKE NUKEM: TIME TO KILL 11
COLIN MCRAE RALLY 12
WORLD CUP '98 13
NINJA: SHADOW OF DARKNESS 14
HEART OF DARKNESS 15
MYTH 15
VIVA FOOTBALL 16
V2000 17
RED ALERT: RETALIATION 18
B-MOVIE 18

EXPOSED

WORLD LEAGUE SOCCER 26
Twenty-two men, an inflated pig's bladder, some wooden posts, and so on.

TOMBI 28
Cute and inexplicable Japanese running and jumping.

PET IN TV 29
Turn your hi-tech games console into a bloody Tamagotchi.

BLAST RADIUS 30
Deep space war in zero gravity from the makers of Colony Wars.

ADIDAS POWER SOCCER 31
Overpriced shirts, prima donna players, monosyllabic managers...

ATARI GREATEST HITS 2 32
Coin-op dinosaurs ported over to your shiny grey box. Multi tap Gauntlet? Yes, mate!

VS. 34
Cool LA gangsters slug it out. Throw your set in the air...

THREE LIONS 36
Beery bloke singalongs, fat ugly white men, bribery, match throwing...

WCW NITRO 38
Easy! Easy! Easy!

REGULARS

SIGNALS 6
Ian 'Newshound' Osborne brings you all the latest PSX gossip. It's a Scoop!

COVER FEATURE 20
The jaw-dropping Gran Turismo gets exposed even further over five sizzling sides.

FEATURE: SOUNDTRACKS 40
BGM - What's it all about, where its been, where's it going?

FEATURE: SHOOT 'EM UPS 104
With all guns blazing we grade PlayStation blasters, from good to very, very bad.

STUFF 108
The Dual Shock Analog Pad sails majestically into the EPM harbour.

SUBS AND BACK ISSUES 101
In this topsy-turvy pre-millenially tense world, it's the only wise thing to do really.

EX-COMMUNICATION 110
The frank exchange of views and opinion is the backbone of democracy, you know.

SWINDLERS INC. 112
Avoid the need for dedication and perseverance with our dirtiest of tricks section.

PLAYER'S GUIDE: RESIDENT EVIL 2 114
All the tension and nasty surprises of the horror classic given away over 6 pages.

PLAYER'S GUIDE: DEATHTRAP DUNGEON 120
Eidos' butt-flossing hack 'n' slasher pulled to bits and dissected in detail.

EX-TRAS 128
The wide world of global culture condensed and spat out for your convenience.

NEXT ISSUE 130
A tour-de-force of software journalism and incisive PSX-iness, in all likelihood.

X-RATED

MOTORHEAD 46
Supercharged hi-action thrill racer that blows its rivals off no problem. Eat its dust!

RASCAL 50
Baseball cap-wearing epoch-hopping exploration by Psygnosis.

GHOST IN THE SHELL 56
Bizarrely-plotted but achingly stylish Manga downloads its personality into the PSX.

XENOCRACY 58
Galactic shooting and politics melded together into a classy unity by Grolier.

CARDINAL SYN 62
Massive clanging swords, bile-vomiting, flatulent fighters; more blood than Casualty.

WAYNE GRETZKY HOCKEY 66
The last of the ice hockey games this year, we pray.

ALUNDRA 68
Object-accumulating wandering about from Psygnosis again.

NBA FASTBREAK '98 74
Tall men running up and down in big trainers bouncing their balls.

PREMIER MANAGER '98 76
Parochial brawling, endless analysis, Jimmy Hill...

SPAWN 80
He was a cool comic book hero, then a mediocre movie star, now a naff game.

GEX 3D: ENTER THE GECKO 82
The suavest, jumpingest, cool-blooded hero we've ever seen.

IMPORTS

TEKKEN 3 86
The Iron Fist Tournament is back, and it sure doesn't want to play nice.

TENCHU 92
Stealth, surprise and guile are the key in this sharp-edged Ninja simulator.

BUSHIDO BLADE 2 94
Highly dangerous single-hit-and-you're dead fighter that values its honour above all.

PLATINUM RANGE

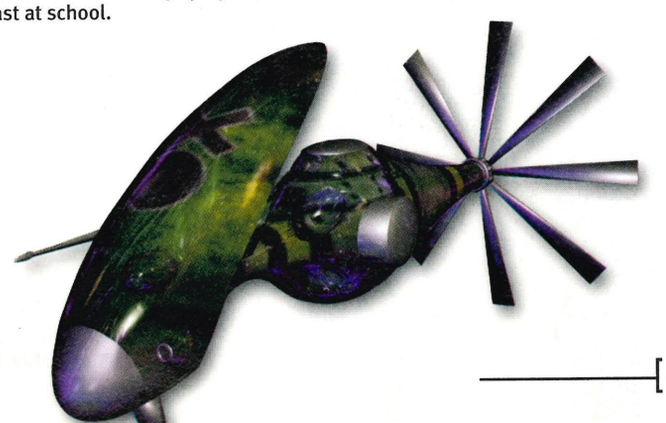
MORTAL COMBAT TRILOGY 96
Aged controversial kill-move grandfather now at a reasonable price.

ADIDAS POWER SOCCER 97
Crass national sentimentalism, corrupt Chairmen, four hours of 'Under the Moon'.

FORMULA 1 98
Not a third braking pedal in sight with this venerable and respected racer.

PANDEMONIUM 99
2.5D platforming pleasure. The delectable Nikki before marketing men re-designed her.

ISS PRO 100
Teams of hired foreign players, Manchester United fans, Being picked last at school.



signals

MORE MERRY MUSINGS FROM THE WEIRD AND WONDERFUL WORLD OF SONY'S COOL CONSOLE

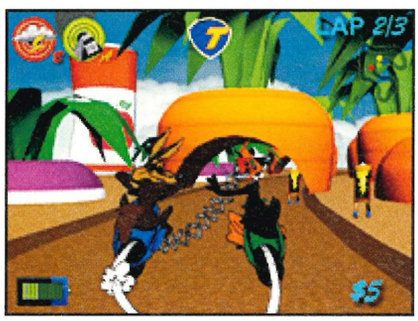
INFOGRAMES SNATCH WARNER BROS LICENCE



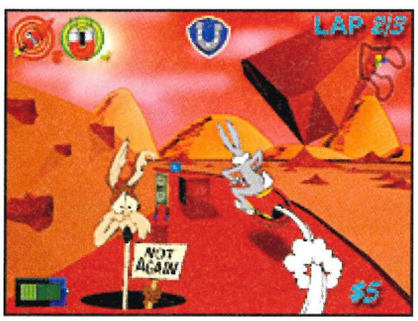
Infogrames Entertainment has bought the licence to produce games based on Warner Bros characters such as Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Tweety and Wile E. Coyote. The first game to use this licence is Space Race, due for a Christmas 1998 release.

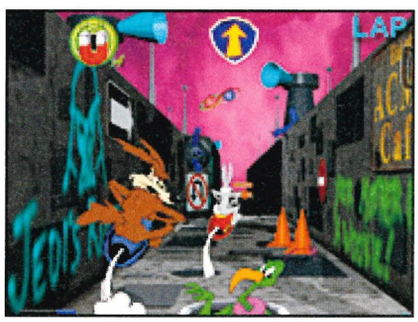
Space Race is a combat/racing sim which sees you playing one of four characters mentioned earlier. It features 'incredible speed, 3D interactive environment and cartoon-style animations. The second Warner Bros licensed game will be Tasmanian Express, an action-puzzle game featuring Tasmanian Devil.

We've only seen a few screenshots so far, but they're looking pretty good. Look out for a Gamespotting/Exposed feature soon.









RIDICULOUS REBOOT RATING



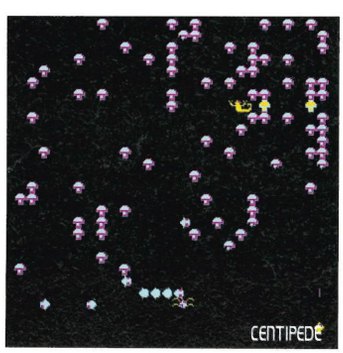


Those who read our review of Electronic Arts' ReBoot last issue (80%) will be surprised to learn the game has received an ELSPA rating of 15+. The game, based on a children's TV show, features some great platform action, but virtually no violence - so why the harsh rating? According to Electronic Arts, who rate the game themselves according to ELSPA guidelines, one of the FMV sequences involving an end-of-level boss is unsuitable for young kids. But will such a rating lose sales? "I shouldn't think so", says EA's Nick Grange. "It's aimed at all ages".

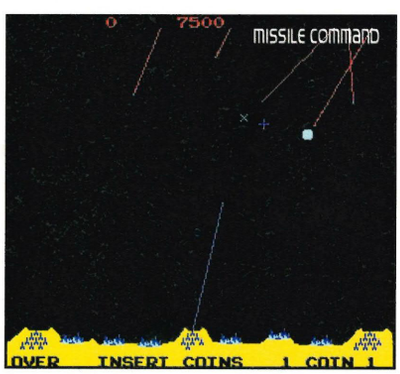
The European Leisure Software Producers' Association (ELSPA) set up the voluntary rating system in 1994 due to public concerns (fuelled by media hysteria) about the content of video games. Unlike the BBFC rating system, which doesn't apply to ReBoot as it has no filmed video footage, the system is voluntary so under 15s are not breaking the law if they purchase the title.

RETRO RAVES RETURN...

Classic Atari titles such as Centipede, Missile Command, Pong and Breakout are to be released on the PlayStation by Hasbro Interactive, who have bought the rights to Atari's entire back catalogue, including more than 75 games. The deal won't affect games already in the pipeline such as Activision's Asteroids update or GT Interactive's Atari Greatest Hits compilations, but all future releases based on Atari games will come from Hasbro.



Hasbro, who have already updated Konami's 1981 coin-op Frogger, plan to release an updated version of Centipede in Autumn 1998, with more Atari classics to follow. The games, which Hasbro describe as 'retro plus', will include the original games as well as the updated versions.



"We're thrilled that these classic Atari games are now part of the Hasbro family", says Tom Dusenberry, President of Hasbro Interactive.

"These ground-breaking games helped to pioneer the video games industry. We intend to bring them back to life by updating them with the latest technology and interactive game design, while preserving their heart and spirit".

Stay tuned for a preview - soon.

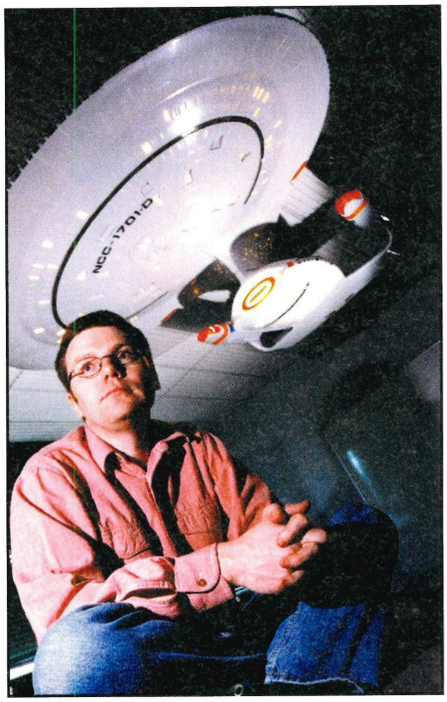
CRYSTAL DYNAMICS ANNOUNCE 1998 LINE-UP





As well as the superb Gex 3D, reviewed this issue, Crystal Dynamics have several other top titles in the pipeline.
Akuji the Heartless is a 3D combat beat-'em-up set against a background of Voodoo magic, available in September 1998. Also due for a September release is The Unholy War, a real-time strategy combat game set on an alien planet. There's no firm release date for Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain 2, but it's set 1,000 years after the original in a decaying world ruled by the vampire Kain, who chose not to sacrifice himself in the first game.
With any luck, we'll cover some or all of these games in more depth next month. In the meantime, here's some gorgeous screenshots...



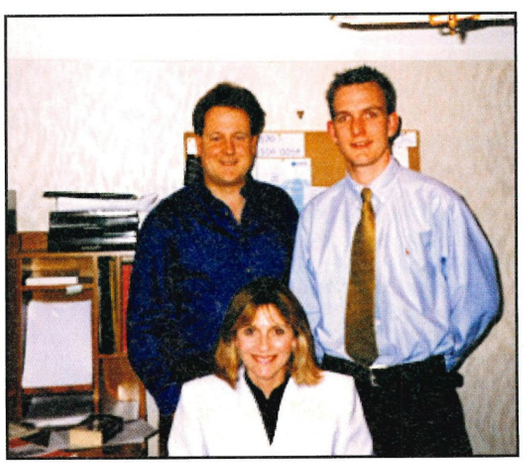


DESIGN A GAME FOR FORTUNE AND FAME

Would-be games developers could get their big break in the Games Developer UK '98 Competition. At stake is prize money totalling £10,000 and, more importantly, the chance to showcase your wares to the video games industry.
The competition has several categories, including best artwork, animation, audio, best utility and best overall game. Some, but not all categories require programming skills - there's room for game designers and storyboards too. Anyone not currently employed by a games developer can enter.
David Jones (pictured), Chairman of the competition's co-sponsor the Scottish Games Alliance and Creative Director of DMA Design (of Lemmings and Grand Theft Auto fame) said: "This is a chance for anyone who thinks they have a good idea for a game to take it forward. There's always room in this industry for creative, innovative ideas and talent".
For further information and a registration form, call the competition hotline on 0800 731 5300 or the GDUK web page at www.gduk.co.uk. Closing date for entries is 31st August, 1998, but registrations must be in by 30th June.
Oh, and if you're wondering, the reason David Jones is pictured under Picard's version of the Starship Enterprise, it's because he's looking for 'The Next Generation of developers'. Doh!

TERMINAL GAMING

Got access to the internet? Want to swap or sell games? Check out www.gamesterminal.com. For a £5 annual subscription, the Gamesterminal team (pictured) can buy, sell or swap unwanted software with other members. What's more, the first 500 readers to write in and state extreme PlayStation Magazine get a year's membership for free. Send your name and address to; Gamesterminal, 8 Carling Road, Sonning Common, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 9TG. The site goes live on 1st May, but can be accessed now for membership information.

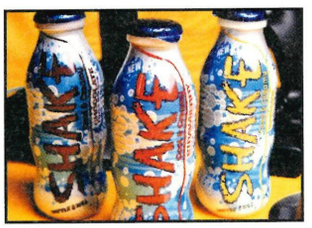


NEW AOL GAMES SERVICES

Internet users who subscribe to AOL's redesigned games channel now enjoy a number of new or improved services. Users can play the on-line game I-War, join in live discussions with developers such as DMA Design and access their cheats library.

MILK IT...

"Shake, rattle and roll gives you gaming power", screams the press release from Lancashire Dairies. They go on to suggest their milk shakes are ideal for gamers, mis-spelling Tekken's Lei Wulong as 'Wolong' in the process. Surely they're taking the rip?



THIS MONTH WE 'AVE MOSTLY BEEN PLAYIN'

DARREN
- Rythm & Dance (Import)
- WLS
- Tekken 3 (Import)

SAUL
- Premier Manager '98
- Tekken 3 (import)
- Gran Turismo (import)

IAN
- Alundra
- Pandemonium (Platinum)
- Tamagotchi Angel

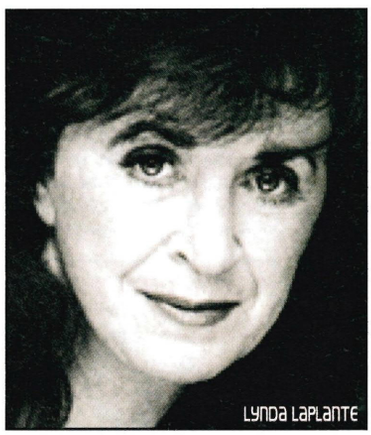
CHRISTIAN
- Motorhead
- Tempest X3
- Colin McRae Rally (preview)

GRAHAM
- Motorhead
- Coolboarders 2
- Wipeout 2097

signals

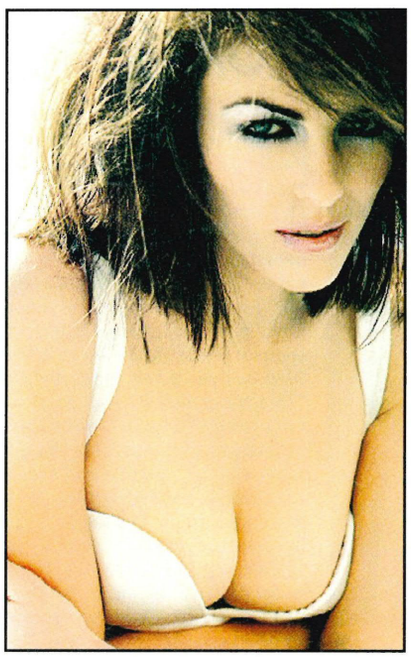
Game Drama on Ch4

Readers may be interested in a new four-part drama to be screened by Channel 4 in the Summer. Lynda La Plante's Killer Net explores a fictional sick computer game, as well as on-line pornography.
Scott Miller (Tam Williams) is a Brighton student who becomes hooked on an interactive computer game, Killer Net, which encourages players to outwit the law and commit the perfect murder. Scott meets his ideal lover Charlotte (Cathy Brolly) on the net. In true Lynda La Plante style, she's a powerful woman making her way in a male dominated environment (in this case computers), but she has an evil streak and lures him into illicit parts of the internet he never dreamed existed. 'When cyber fantasy becomes frightening reality, killing is no longer a game'. The show also features former Take That star Jason Orange.



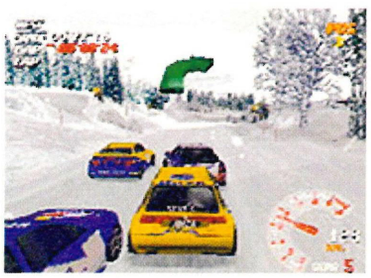
On the release of the film War Games, too many people with too few brain cells took it far too seriously, and feared anyone with a then-state-of-the-art Spectrum could unwittingly start World War III. There have been cases of stalking and tasteless games on the internet, but far fewer than the sensationalist press would have us believe and nothing as wicked as Killer Net. Let's hope people take the show for what it is, a powerful, exciting and above all FICTIONAL piece of drama.
Killer Net is to be broadcast in four hour-long episodes starting on Tuesday, 5th May, though the date is subject to change.

Tomb Raider Tales: More Movie Madness

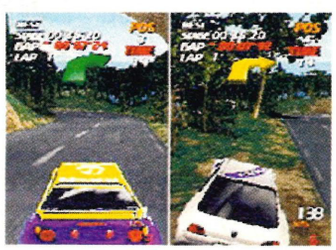


At smeggin' last! After much hype and speculation, Eidos has signed a licensing agreement giving Paramount Pictures the rights to produce a Tomb Raider film.
While details are currently sketchy, the movie is definitely to be a live action thriller (the Toy Story approach was considered, but abandoned), and although who plays Lara is yet to be confirmed, rumour has it Liz Hurley is being considered. The film will be produced by Laurence Gordon, of 48 Hrs, Die Hard/Die Hard 2, Predator/Predator 2 and Event Horizon fame, alongside Lloyd Levin who has worked with him on several previous titles.
Joe Goldwyn, President of Paramount Motion Pictures, said, "We are thrilled by the possibilities of this project. We are confident it will result in a ground-breaking live-action movie with worldwide appeal".
Naturally, there could be only one choice for this month's Lara lookalike. Take a bow, Ms Hurley...

V-Rally Re-Priced



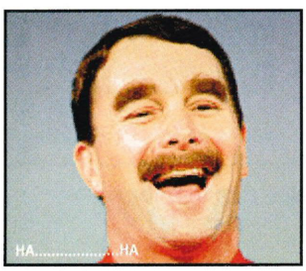
Infogrames UK's top-selling title V-Rally is to be relaunched at £29.99, with ads in the specialist and lifestyle press. Although ten months old, the company feel it can still hold its own with TOCA and Gran Turismo, and don't feel the need to repackage it as a platinum title just yet.



The game came out before EPM, but we can now tell you it's a really great drive. Featuring a range of different cars, courses and weather conditions, there's certainly enough variety to keep you playing. The driving model's twitchy at first, but getting used to it is worth the effort. If you're looking for a rally-style driver, this one could well be right up your street, and no doubt overtaking on a blind bend.

Mansell- New Career, New Game?

At the age of 44, F1 and Indy superhero Nigel Mansell has relaunched his driving career in touring cars. Surely a game based on our moustachioed maestro must follow. Mansell's TOCA '98, anyone?



Asteroid Collision Imminent

Activision are to produce a PSX update of the 1979 Atari coin-op Asteroids. The game will, they argue, 'recapture the non-stop dodging and firing of the original, and take the game to an all-new level with vivid 3D graphics, expansive playing areas, increasingly difficult space hazards and multiple modes of gameplay'. Stay tuned for a preview - soon.



It Pays To Advertise

In an Easter marketing push, Sony are to advertise in FHM, Loaded, Maxim, Face, Arena, Deluxe, Sky, GQ, Esquire, Q and I-D. Nintendo are to advertise in the Beano and the Dandy!

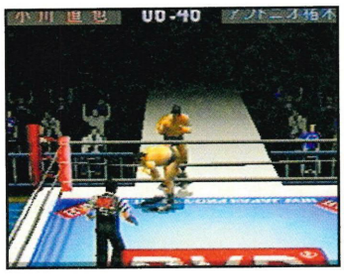
OVERSEAS

We had a cracking line-up for you all this month, with details of a possible Tomb Raider beater. The game's so good looking Darren has taken it and reviewed it in this issue. Of course, the big one on everyone's mind is (of course) Tekken 3 and again, thanks to the guys at Sony giving us the OK, we've brought you a review of it in this issue. We also still don't have too many details of Parasite Eve, which is eagerly awaited, but you should find something in the next issue. For this month's section we're looking at a couple of games that have been out for a while in Japan. They both brought people into the streets and made them queue for hours and hours in their bid to gain a copy of the game, and a couple of new titles too.

WRESTLING 3



The first of the big names is a wrestling one, but because we can't understand too much of the old Japanese language we don't know its exact name. So we will call it Wrestling 3. When it first boots up, you're treated to some FMV of big guys smacking the hell out of one another and to be honest you could be forgiven if you thought you were playing one of the American WCW games. It turns out wrestling is as big in Japan as it is in this country, as well as the USA.



You get the chance to wrestle as one of the famous faces from the ring, but most of them are wearing hideous masks (or has Darren got a job on the quiet?), and then get the chance to pulverise them into the canvas. This is a very good game and is somewhat better than some of the releases seen in this country. It contains all the moves and slams as well as the chance to take the fight outside the ring or use the ropes to propel yourself into your opponent. We all enjoyed this in the office as true feelings seemed to creep out while be were challenging one another, but it's still the sort of game designed for the true fan only.

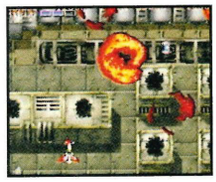




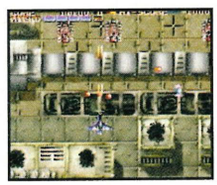
STAHLFEEDER

Now this is definitely a pure shoot-'em-up, but don't expect it to challenge SquareSoft's brilliant Einhander. This is more like your old retro games on the Amiga rather that your modern state-of-the-art stuff.

If you've played games like Xenon II, you know what to expect from this. There are nice touches, including the option to pick different pilots and aircraft to fight in. This means the missions change slightly according to who you select, but the aim is still the same.

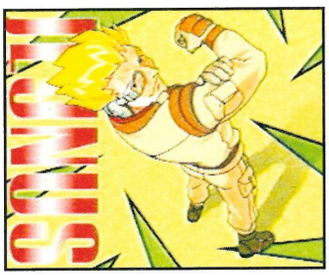


Again, this one proved a big hit on its initial release, but only the die-hard shooting fans will appreciate it now. It just looks like an old Amiga classic and will fail to attract anyone new to the genre.



THE GAME PARADISE 2



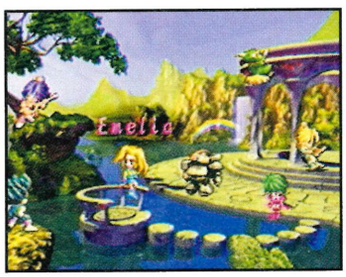


This is the first of two new releases we're covering this issue. To say this is bizarre is an understatement. When you switch on the game the first thing you see is a guy with an enormous tongue, who wouldn't look out of place as a Licker in Resident Evil 2. As the game boots up, you get the feeling you're in some kind of TV game show as it rolls into a shoot-'em-up. The effect of you flying around a large gambling hall is fairly cool, with all the one-armed bandits flashing and bleeping away underneath you, but unfortunately the longitude of concentration required to make it a good game seems to fall well short. This is one for the Japanese and them only.





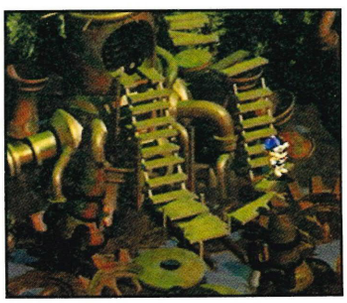
SAGA FRONTIER



Well surprise, surprise, we couldn't let a month pass without those beautiful people at SquareSoft releasing yet another RPG that's looking to be another smash hit. And guess what? It's an American release, so at least we can understand what's going on.

One of the best features is that you can start the game with a choice of character. There are several different people you can play, and each one has his own starting position and takes you through a different route to the end. The task is the same, but how the adventure unfolds changes according to who you're playing.

The graphics are the cutsey style we've come to expect from this sort of adventure game. It also boasts that to complete the game with each character, you need to clock up around 140 hours of gameplay, so value for money isn't an issue. Add to this the excellent music that accompanies the game and it looks like another classic for the SquareSoft team.



Gamespotting

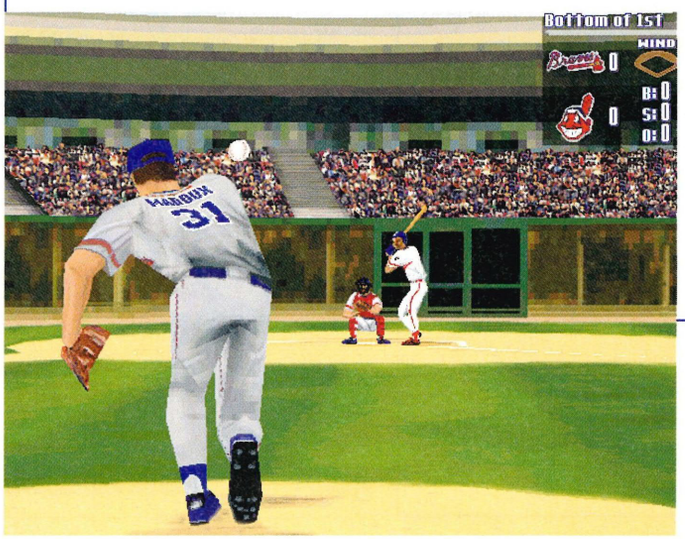
These titles are a way off yet, so we've precious little information on them. That's what Gamespotting's all about - stay tuned for previews and reviews of all these titles, but for now, here's a little taster of what's to come. This month we demystify Myth, bomb Duke Nukem and boot a few footie titles...

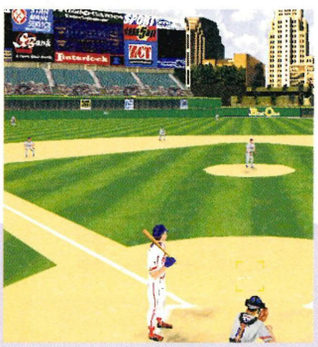
Hardball 6

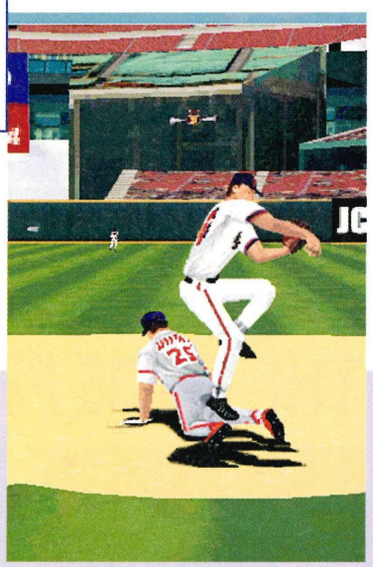
Publisher - EA
Developer - EA Sports
Released - TBA



Baseball, America's National Sport, has steadily declined in popularity in modern times, being surpassed by gridiron football and especially basketball in the affections of the sports-crazy USA. Enormous player wage packets have caused league-wide strikes, while the propensity of players for various drug or fornication scandals would embarrass even the Arsenal squad. Nonetheless it still has enough draw to warrant computer game versions, and much as is the case with ice hockey, we inevitably end up with them on these shores.

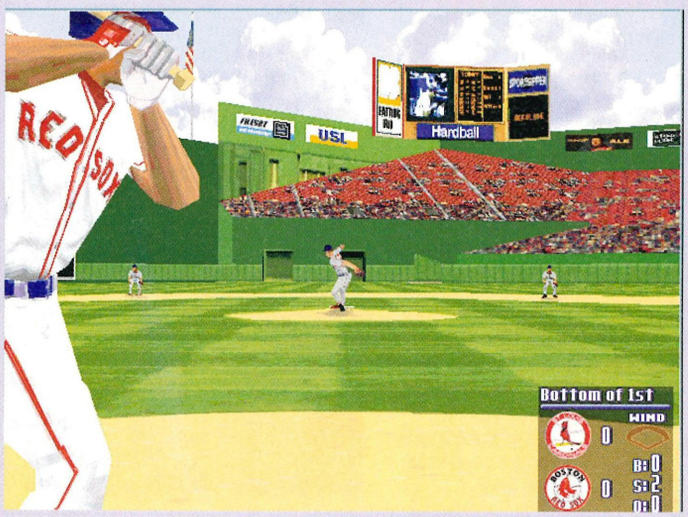








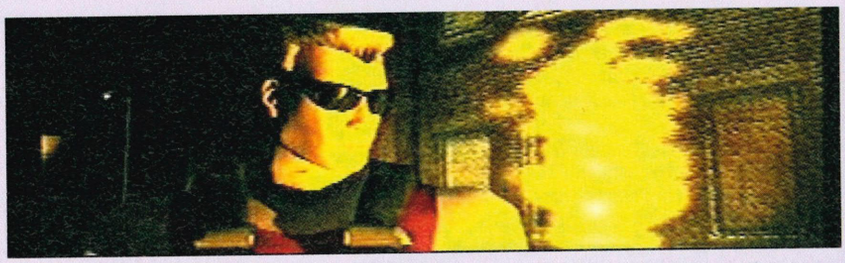
Hardball 6 takes this statistic-gorging hour-wasting adult game of rounders onto your PSX, and promises 'unparalleled' 3D motion-captured polygon-based action, and 'dynamic' gameplay. Over a seasons-long campaign, players can improve their form or deteriorate with age, and retire empty and hollow men. New team members can be created from scratch or nurtured through the college ranks and minor leagues until they can cut it with the big boys. Interestingly, serial link play is promised, which will allow you to take on a mate in one of the accurately-modelled modern or old-time stadiums.



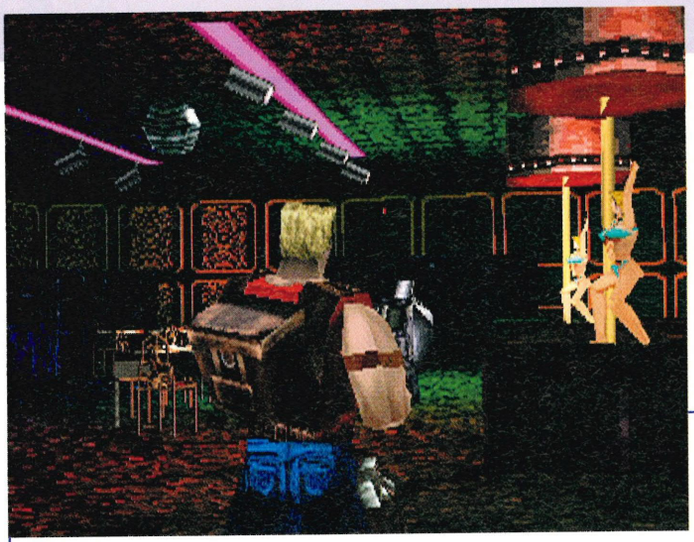


Duke Nukem : Time to Kill

Publisher - GT Interactive
Developer - 3D Realms
Released - TBA



After getting their extraterrestrial heads kicked in by Duke Nukem in Los Angeles, his alien enemies have adopted a new tactic to get rid of the PSX's own version of Arnold. Rather than going toe to toe with him, they've concocted a new plan that utilises their more sophisticated technological know-how to create time portals that let them jump from point to point in history. Hot on their trail is the doubty Duke, armed to the teeth with his trusty array of missile launchers, pipe bombs and so on. In Ancient Rome he takes on Centurion Pig Cops with daggers. Porcine Police Knights in Medieval times get a taste of his crossbows or catapult, while a six-shooter wastes the dirty swine in the Old West.



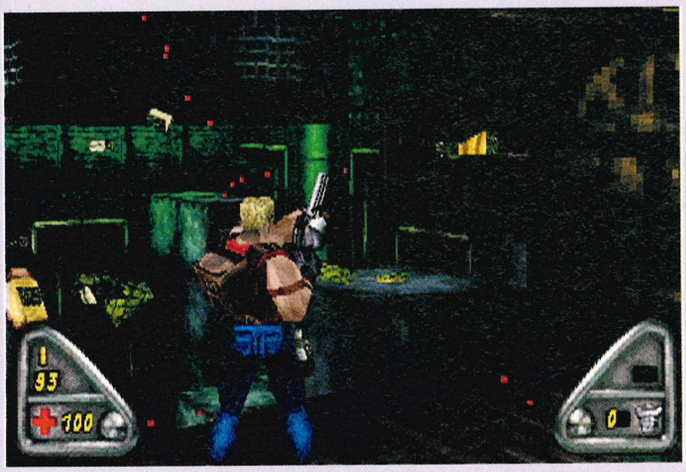


Viewed in third person 3D with dynamic lighting effects and 'fine' detail, this new game moves away from the Doom-clone original, putting the murderous Nukem into a more Tomb Raider-esque perspective on the action. With 'totally interactive' environments featuring effects such as water splashes, flowing electricity and ricocheting bullets that add to the realism, expect the one-line witticisms that made Duke the man he is to pop up as he pops off the non-human scum with great gusto.

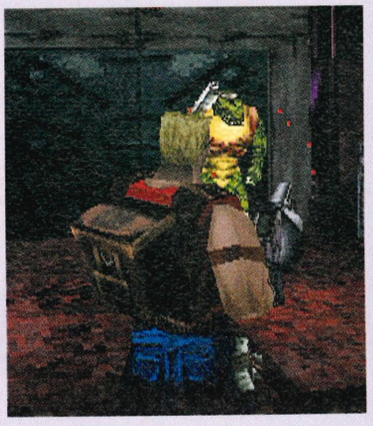










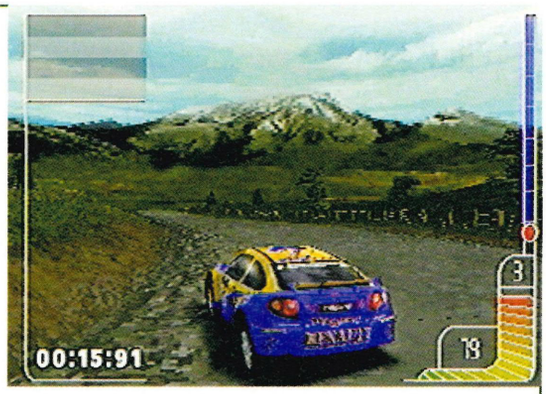


Colin McRae Rally

Publisher - Codemasters
Developer - In House
Released - 3rd Quarter '98

Following their all-conquering TOCA: Touring Car Championship, CodeMasters are currently developing a rally game to compete with the likes of V-Rally and Rallycross. Those who have played TOCA know CodeMasters have the ability to develop a fantastic driving game, and from the very early version of Colin McRae Rally we've played, we can certainly testify to this.

TOCA's a champion in the handling stakes, and Colin McRae Rally is proving to be just as good, if not better in this department. The physics engine used so well in TOCA has been adapted to the rally side of racing and the cars are already feeling extremely realistic, as much as we can tell - we've never driven rally cars either. Anyway, Colin McRae Rally doesn't just implement the TOCA racing engine in a rally environment. There's bound to be comparisons, but from what we've seen, Colin McRae Rally is set to be a totally different entity.



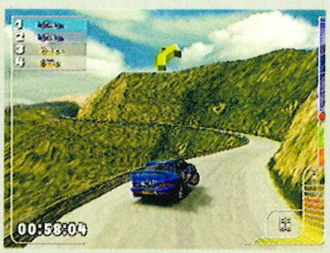
For a start, TOCA only takes place on tarmac and concrete whereas a rally takes place on any number of different surfaces, from mud and dust to snow and ice. This means CodeMasters had to come up with different handling for each surface, and from what we've played, everything is looking and feeling hunky-dory.



There are eight rallies for you to take part in - all set in different parts of the world. The disc only had one full rally to test our driving skills, and this was set in New Zealand. The six stages in New Zealand are a heady mix of dirt tracks, muddy fields and tarmac roads, all of which require different driving styles and skills. There's one stage from each of the other rallies, but each rally has its own very unique style and setting. Corsica has you haring around mountainside roads with only a foot-wall stopping you plunging down the mountainside. The British course takes you through muddy forest roads just after a snow thaw, so grip is something that doesn't figure here. All of the stages were up to a very high standard. The actual course design is also of a very high standard and of a very tough nature. Luckily you get a co-pilot as well as direction arrows to help you around the courses.









The finished game should have eight rally cars for you to try, four of which are front-wheel drive whilst the remainder are four-wheel drive. Both types of car require you to learn a different driving style, which has to be adapted for each different track surface. The version we played only had four cars, all of which were drawn to a very high standard. If you've seen TOCA, you know CodeMasters have a canny ability for producing excellent-looking and very realistic cars.

We've only seen a fraction of what the finished version of Colin McRae Rally holds in store, but so far we're very impressed. If TOCA is anything to go by, Colin McRae Rally is a potential V-Rally beater. Watch out for a full preview next month, with a review to follow.









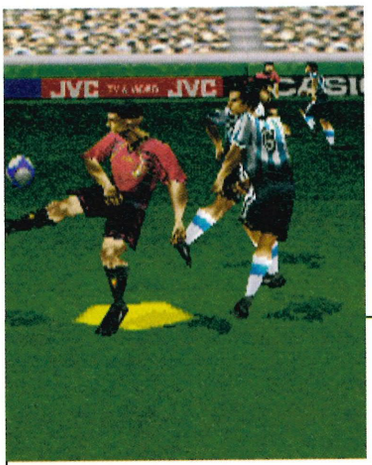
World Cup 98

Publisher - Electronic Arts
Developer - In House
Released - May

As the only 'official' World Cup licence, EA's World Cup 98 has enlisted the titans of the soccer commentary world, Lineker, Waddle, Lynam and Motson all of whom have donated their voices to add that all-important air of authenticity to proceedings. In addition to this big-name prestige, the game contains all the teams, players and kits from the soon-to-come Gallic tournament, plus the now actually quite common 'Classic Team' mode, in which the great squads of yesteryear can be pitched head-to-head against one another.











Other features include Star Player Moves, whereby the top players have their own unique shimmies and manoeuvres, while different team members can react to changing weather conditions and playing surfaces individually. Full team strategies are open to adjustment and refinement, while there's even a World Cup Trivia section to test your knowledge and football factual recall. No news on the graphics engine, or whether it's another evolution of the FIFA series, but it's fair to assume this will probably be the case.









Ninja- Shadow of Darkness

Publisher - Eidos
Developer - Core Design
Released - September

History tells that the two most powerful Shoguns who ruled Feudal Japan split the country down the middle through their bitter rivalry, revolving around who would ultimately become Emperor. Only after years of bloody and costly war had an uneasy truce been agreed. Mistrust, though, was still the order of the day, and Katasaki, one of the warlords, decided to strike a terrible deal with the demon Batanaka, exchanging his soul for diabolic aid. Accordingly, a repellent army of dragons, trolls, and goblins appeared under Kataski's control, whom he promptly sent on a murderous rampage across his enemy's territory.
Japan was decimated and the wicked ruler now controlled the whole island, leaving it saturated with unholy power, causing the ordinary people to become possessed by evil and the dead to inconveniently rise from their graves. Years later a prodigal young Ninja returned from a spiritual journey to find his home country a wasteland. Vowing revenge, he became a computer character on a PlayStation game, determined to banish the demon horde from Nippon and achieve a truly high score.



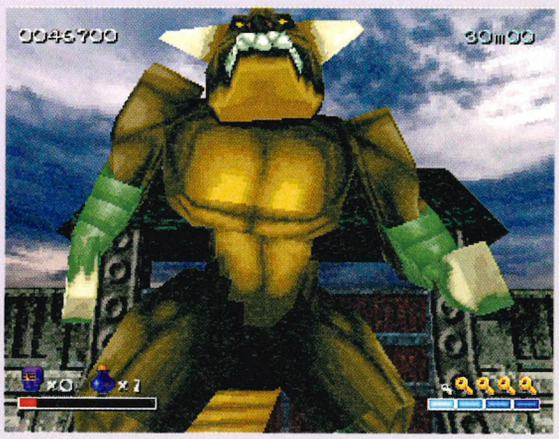








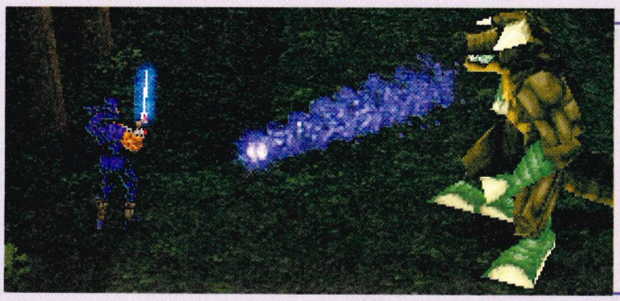
Created by Core Design, who were of course responsible for the gargantuan Tomb Raiders 1 & 2, Ninja takes its inspiration from such hoary arcade classics as Rygar, Double Dragon and Ghosts and Goblins. It promises 13 stages of fully 3D 'highly detailed' environments, incorporating a range of special effects that apparently 'stretch the hardware to its limit'. A roving camera eye gives a 'cinematic' look to proceedings as it freely swings about, dependant on the Ninja hero's position and his combat situation.







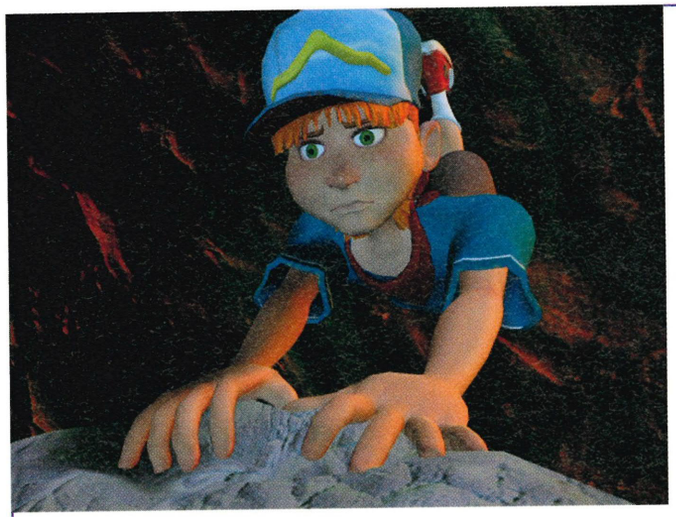




Looking to slit his gizzard are over 50 different foes who are all 'animated to a high standard', plus 13 enormous and progressively more deadly end-of-level guardians. To see these off he can fight hand to hand, use magic or employ more conventional weapons such as throwing knives, a staff, scythe or katana. Hidden bonuses include more health, extra lives, invulnerability, hidden rooms and suchlike, plus a handy shop at the end of each level. However, reaching this is quite an unlikely occurrence, as numerous assorted puzzles, traps and other vicious hazards bar your way. Narrative cut scenes punctuate key points in the Ninja's progress, using the main game engine so as to ensure that the flow of play remains nice and liquid. Would-be assassins can sharpen their blades meticulously in lieu of its September release.

Heart of Darkness

Publisher - Infogrames
Developer - Amazing Studio
Released - Summer 98







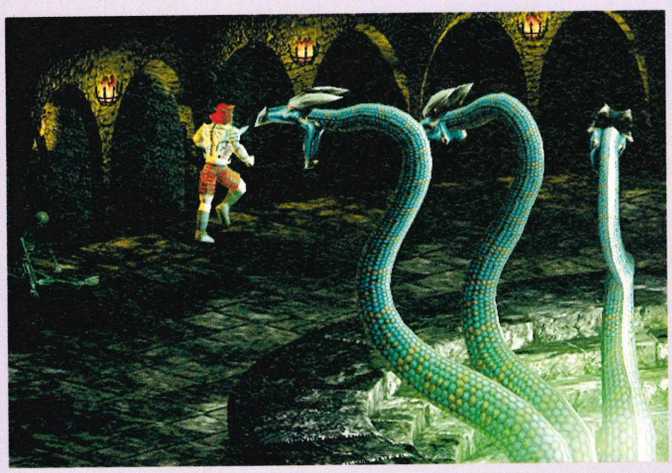


In a parallel world very much like our own, an ordinary boy called Andy is scared of the dark. His beloved dog Whisky has been kidnapped by the mysterious Forces of Darkness (for a reason best known to them), so Andy must face his worst phobia head-on and enter a terrifying secret realm, populated by soul-hungry spectres, bed-time demons and bizarre monsters. As you might have guessed only you can stave off the evil masses and guide Andy to his final confrontation with the melodramatic Master of Darkness.

Eight 'huge' levels provide the challenge, the landscapes plotted in full 3D allowing for a wide range of climbing, swinging and swimming movement. Forgoing the quest for hyper-realistic graphics, developers I-Heroes have instead tried to bestow a more cartoonish feel for the characters, while backgrounds are closer to paintings than the over-familiar clinically-rendered images. The main character has over 2000 frames of animation in one direction alone, apparently, so expect some slinky movement, while the action is augmented by half an hour's worth of FMV that expands on the unfolding plot. Atmospheric sound and FX are provided by Hollywood-pedigree musicians and effects creators, all reproduced via an 18-channel 'high quality' stereo set-up. You'll have to wait for the sunny summer to take the plunge into the cimmerian pit that awaits Andy, so eat plenty of carrots in the meantime.

Myth: History in the Making

Publisher - System 3
Developer - In House
Released - TBA



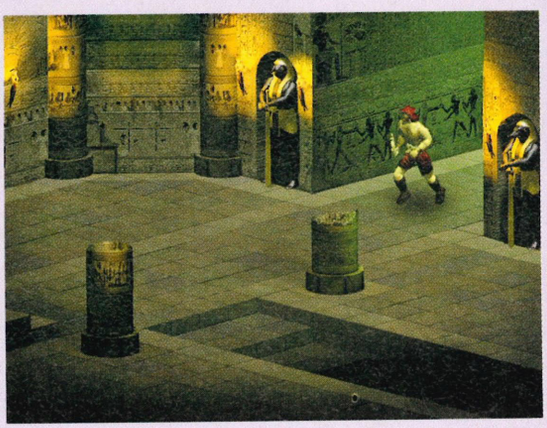
As reported last issue, this one's been delayed due to a legal dispute with Eidos, though it will see the light of day eventually.

This PSX update of the 8- and 16-bit original sees our hero taken back in time to confront the evil god Dameron. Your battles take you through several levels, each based on an ancient mythology. There's a Greek level, an Egyptian stage and even a Norse (Viking) era. System 3 promise 'some of the most dramatic and diverse graphics ever'. The PC shots here certainly look dramatic, and the PSX version is likely to be equally impressive. All the myths and legends are well researched and 'accurately reflect contemporary documents'; no Disney-style stealing a mythological character and ignoring the mythology, as those who've watched Hercules will appreciate.

We've no release date as of yet, but stay tuned - the legal hassles delaying its release won't last forever.

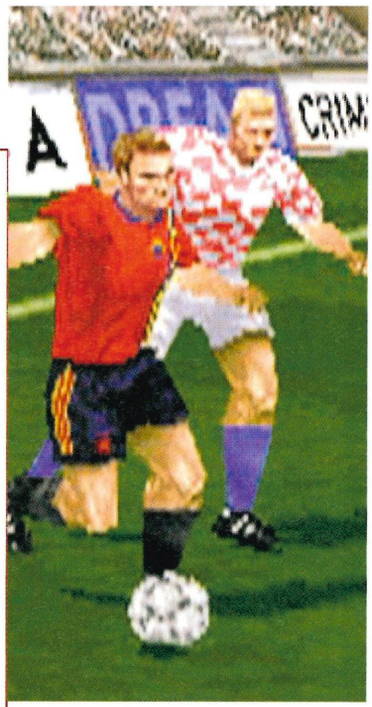






Viva Football

Publisher - Virgin
Developer - In House
Released - Autumn '98



Homing in on the lucrative pile of cash that is World Cup Fever comes Viva Football from Virgin Interactive. The main difference with this latest offering, according to the developers, is the 'unique' control system granting players a superior form of influence over their team members, mainly centred around passing techniques. It allows for passes to the target player's feet or through balls pitched just in front, allowing them to run on to the ball. Sly one-twos, dummies and feints can also be employed to dupe the opposition at a touch of the pad, but the controls are simple enough to enable pick-up-and-play beginners to get to grips with the basic moves quickly.

The visual aspect doesn't lose out either, boasting 'polished, extremely hi-resolution 3D'. The programmers have avoided the big-name motion captures that have become a constant in football games lately, instead hiring the talents of the mighty Barnet squad to be digitised. The advantage of using an entire team is that defenders, midfield players and strikers have all been captured individually, hopefully leading to a greater look of authenticity. Over 5,400 keyframes have been taken, so expect something special.

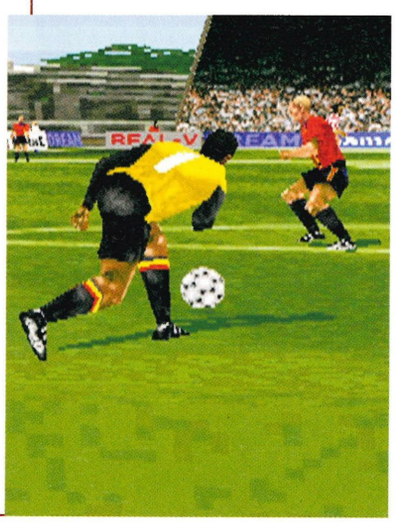


They think it's all over...

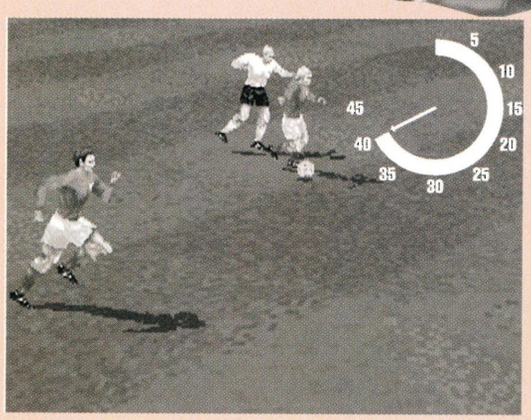
Whilst obviously riding the back of the current World Cup, the game also has an interesting time travelling feature, allowing the great teams of the past to be pitted against one another to see who truly was the greatest. Hopefully we can expect big shorts and half-time fags from the England '66 team, and huge wavy permed hair via the Brazil 1970 squad. Bona fide music from the appropriate period of history will also accompany the matches. Let's hope the terrifying 1974 Scotland tune is absent, then.

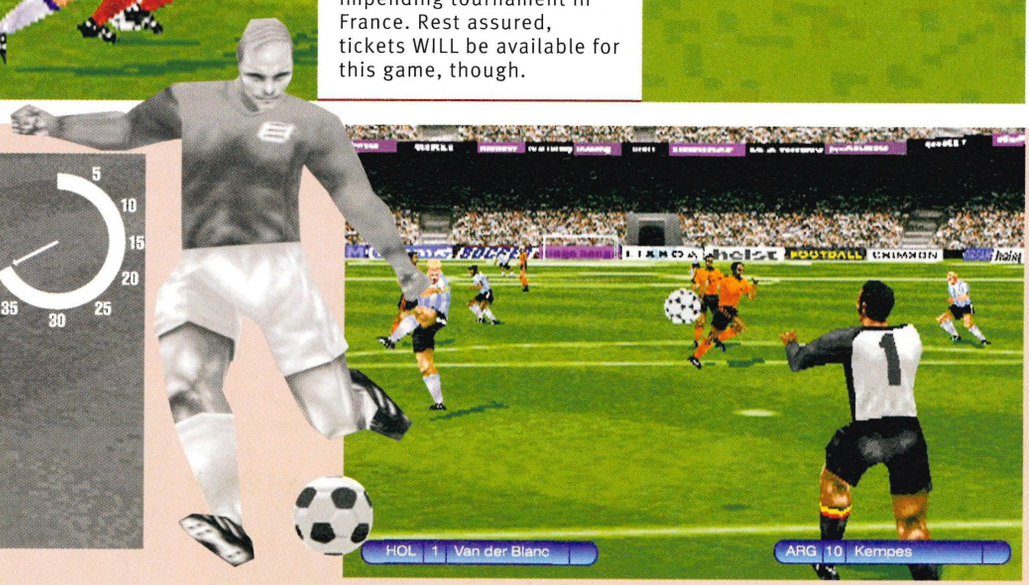
As 987 teams are available, with 16,224 players contained therein, the long-term challenge should be a sure bet, while at least 300 stadiums and 1,974 separate kits mean no two games should ever look the same. In addition, instead of a droning commentator we're promised the all-new PlayerChat (TM) feature, in which team mates shout for the ball with typical earthy soccer exclamations. On top of that, the crowd have been given artificial intelligence so they react differently according to the current situation, such as booing a poor display at a 'pushover' club. Over seven minutes of crowd samples have been taken, avoiding the irritating looping that becomes obvious after extended play.





As things stand, Viva Football seems a strong potential front runner in the inevitable wave of footie sims approaching tsunami-like thanks to the impending tournament in France. Rest assured, tickets WILL be available for this game, though.



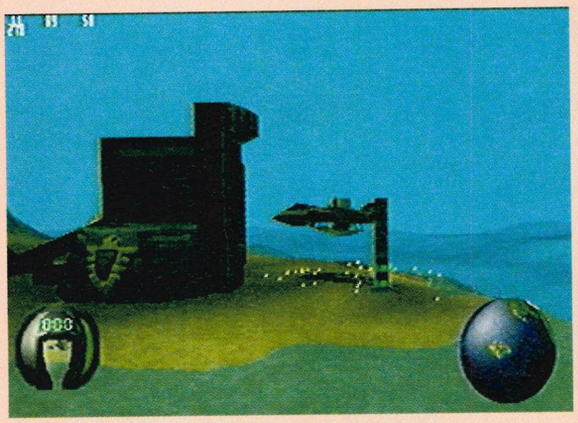


It is now!

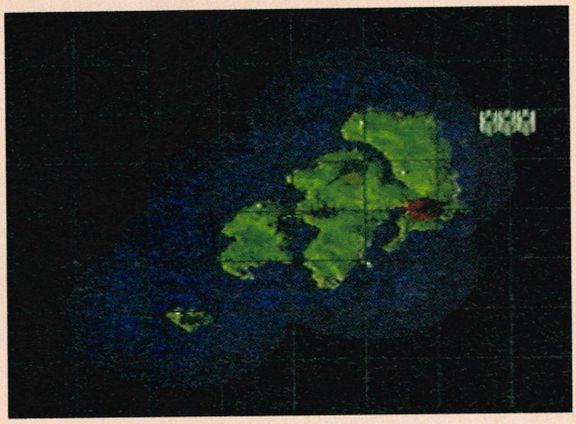
The sixties matches are lovingly reproduced in bona-fide grainy black and white TV pictures, along with an authentic analogue clock ticking down in the corner of the screen. As you can see venerable greats such as Bobby Robson have been lovingly polygonned, so hopefully we can expect to see Bobby Charlton's legendary combover fluttering behind him in the breeze. After-goal celebrations will also be based around manly handshakes rather than uncouth cuddling and snogging like those continental types. Whether the commentary will be in the plummy tones of a 1960's announcer remains to be seen, but you can rest assured the crowd noise won't contain any non-BBC acceptable expletives.

V 2000

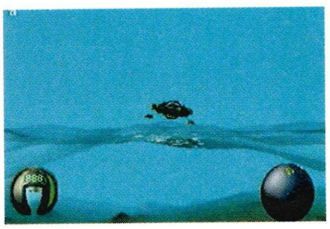
Publisher - Grolier
Developer - Frontier Dev.
Released - Summer '98

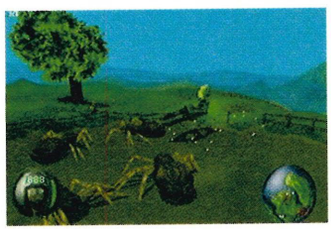


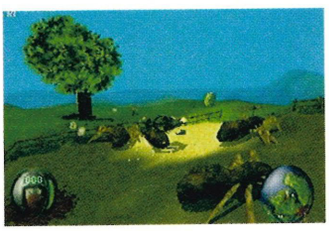
Anyone who's been playing games since the 80s will remember David Braben's 8-bit classic Virus. Given the current craze for revamping old titles, it was inevitable the game should get the 90s remix treatment, and V200 looks set to offer more than a few graphical tweaks. Like its ageing inspiration, the heart of the new title is controlling your craft and coping with the effects of inertia. When in 'hover' mode you've no brakes, making it tricky to traverse the terrain without overshooting your target. Pick up the necessary fuel and you can turn your vehicle into a flier, lifting off the ground with a controlled rush of jets. To move this monster forward, you have to tilt it forward, losing lift but gaining forward thrust like a helicopter. It's a real pain at first, but makes for some fearsomely rewarding gameplay as you become more adept at the controls.

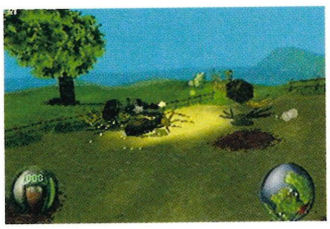


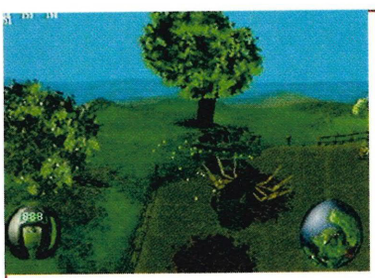
The aim of the game is to defend your worlds against an alien infestation. The extra terrestrials aren't evil, hard-assed freakos, but simple (albeit large) insectoids living their lives the only way they know how. They bear you no ill will, but their proliferation will lead to your demise - they must be stopped. With many storylines offering a view of good and evil which would embarrass a 13th Century theologian, this approach is a breath of fresh terraformed oxygen.





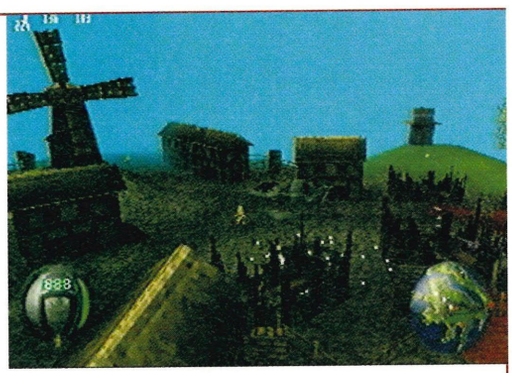






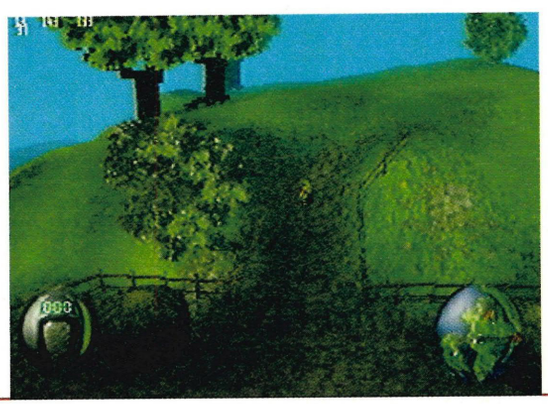
Better Blasting

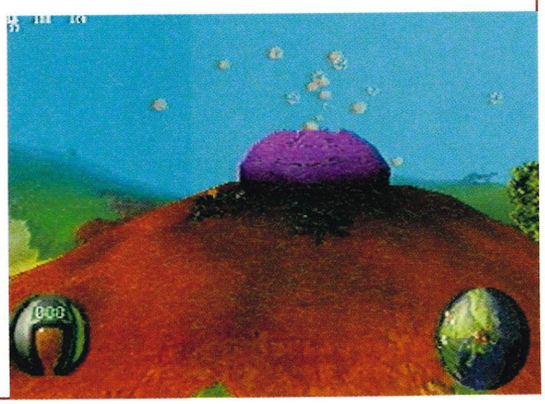
Starting the game with a simple pop-gun, by rescuing stranded citizens and taking them to your base where they're trained as scientists you can develop new and exciting weapons. You need them as you battle through 30 levels set across six worlds, including water, rock and ice planets. The missions get progressively harder (natch), with the weapons and other devices offering a constant learning curve as you seek to master your new technology. This is far more satisfying than starting each level afresh with your basic craft, losing power-ups when you start a new one. It's great to see a game where the difficulty curve is based on more than more enemies, bigger enemies, faster enemies, stronger enemies.



The game is far from perfect at this stage, but with so long to go before it's released, we would hardly expect it to be. The representation of your own craft on the radar screen is a little too close to that of the stranded citizens at present, but this is neither a fatal flaw or tricky to change. Only one perspective is offered too, but with any luck, we'll get an in-ship viewpoint by the time it's released.

As well as Virus, David Braben co-wrote the legendary Elite in the 80s, a title often heralded as one of the greatest games ever. The 16-bit sequel, Frontier: Elite II was disappointing, but this was because it was rushed onto the shelves by the software company, rather than design or programming flaws. With Braben's keen knowledge of game physics and his respected Frontier Developments team in tow, V2000 could well prove the thinking man's shoot-'em-up of the 90s.





Red Alert- Retaliation

Publisher - Virgin
Developer - Westwood
Released - TBA



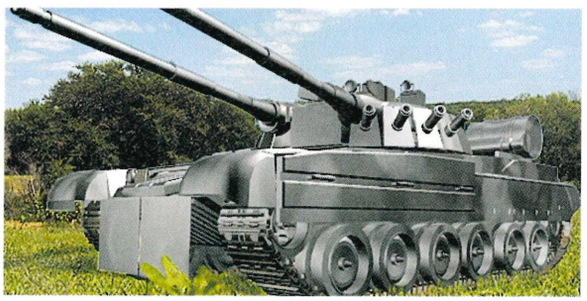
Following tracks laid in the scorched earth by the link-up classic Red Alert comes Retaliation, an expansion module that takes the original's all-out mass warfare into a new dimension. Extra vehicles are included, such as missile-bearing submarines, a demolition truck, the voltage-spewing Tesla Tank and the mysterious Chrono Tank that presumably has time-twisting abilities. Expect the thrill of mechanised conflict to course through your veins soon.











B-Movie

Publisher - GT Interactive
Developer - King of the Jungle
Released - October '98





With a comic-book/schlock horror look that follows the same kind of vibe as Tim Burton's almost-superb Mars Attacks!, B-Movie is a shoot-'em-up that gleefully uses all the signs of Fifties cold war paranoia-fuelled alien invasion movies as its stylistic gimmick. The grinningly nihilistic strip-art background info pages promise 'the needless deaths of innocent women and children!' and 'amazing weapons of super science to destroy the hyper-intelligent alien invaders', with according pictures of hapless earthlings being vaporised by green-hued death rays. A variety of 'never before seen special effects' are present, it seems, 'including lens flare!', which is quite frankly a strange thing to big up, as virtually every damn game nowadays seems to have some kind of refraction effect wafting about. Still, the screenshots look tantalisingly plush, and the ironic humour is a refreshing change to the usual po-faced epic scenarios software houses manage to churn out for this type of game, so definitely watch the skies for B-Movie's landing with a mixture of dread and awe.









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Gran Turismo

GT is the best racing game ever. We can tell you that and we haven't even reviewed it yet. Still, we've been caning the import version and we know that you're hungry for as much GT-related info as you can possibly get. So rather than give you the import review, we've blown the game open and divulged this top secret information, as a prelude to next month's monumental review...

GRAN TURISMO

The Competitions

The GT League is where you can earn the big prizes and the big prize money, but you have to work hard to get into the higher echelons. The Sunday Cup is your entry into the world of GT league racing, but compared to the GT World Cup you might as well be racing pedal go-karts. It's going to take you a lot of work to get to the World Cup as you need to obtain your International 'A' licence, which is no mean feat. Once you get there, though, the racing is the fastest and most competitive you can find on Gran Turismo.

Sunday Cup

RACES 3
AUTUMNRING MINI . . . . . 2 laps
HIGH SPEED RING . . . . . 2 laps
GRAND VALLEY EAST . . . . . 2 laps
DIFFICULTY . . . . . Novice
WIN . . . . . DEMIO

The Sunday Cup sets you in good stead to tackle the rest of the cups. It's a good idea to stick on the Sunday Cup for a while to earn some money so you can get yourself a better car for the later leagues. You're racing against standard Honda Civics and Toyota MR2s, so don't bother spending too much cash to buy yourself a snazzy car; yet.



GT World Cup

RACES 6
HIGH SPEED RING . . . . . 3 laps
TRIAL MOUNTAIN . . . . . 3 laps
GRAND VALLEY SPEEDWAY I . . . . . 3 laps
SPECIAL STAGE R5 . . . . . 3 laps
DEEP FOREST . . . . . 3 laps
SPECIAL STAGE RII. . . . . 3 laps
DIFFICULTY . . . . . World class
WIN . . . . . Unknown

Don't even think about entering the GT World Cup until you have enough cash for a highly-tuned beast or one of the Special Edition cars. In fact, don't think about entering the GT World Cup for a long, long time because you need the International 'A' licence and obtaining this is one hell of a job. If you thought that the GT Cup sounds hard, you'd better think again. You find yourself up against many of the special editions and even on the easier circuits such as the High Speed Ring the Impreza Rally and souped-up Primera leave you for dust.



GT Cup

RACES 4
GRAND VALLEY SPEEDWAY I . . . . . 3 laps
DEEPFOREST . . . . . 3 laps
SPECIAL STAGE R5 . . . . . 3 laps
TRIAL MOUNTAIN . . . . . 3 laps
DIFFICULTY . . . . . Pro
WIN . . . . . CHASER ltd edition

The GT Cup is where it's at. It's here you first encounter the real speed and competitiveness that GT can offer. You race on full tracks rather than the mini versions found on the earlier cups and each race consists of three laps. This extra lap really does make a difference because you have to keep everything as smooth and fast as possible for longer than the two previous cups. It's also here where all the powerhouse cars first make an appearance so watch out for the Honda NSX, the Dodge Viper and the Toyota Supra.



Clubman Cup

RACES 3
AUTUMNRING . . . . . 2 laps
CLUBMAN STAGE R5 . . . . . 2 laps
TRIAL MOUNTAIN . . . . . 2 laps
DIFFICULTY . . . . . Amateur
WIN . . . . . CAMARO Z28

The Clubman Cup requires a decent car, so you need a bit of cash before you go for it. You also need an 'A' licence to enter, so as well as cash you need a bit of driving skill. Your opponents are slightly souped-up versions of the Sunday Cup cars, but you also have to contend with Subaru Imprezas and Honda Preludes. The Clubman Cup is no walk-over, but the prize money and free car for the winner is worth the effort.



Special Events

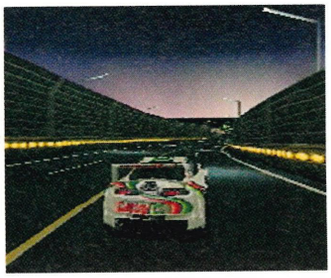
On top of the GT Leagues there are 13 Special events for you to take part in. These range from front-wheel drive only tournaments to special 60-lap races. You can also enter races that pit certain country's cars against another country. The Route 11 races pit you against some of the fastest cars in the game over either 30 or 60 laps. This is the ultimate in GT racing and only the most skilled drivers will finish, let alone win.

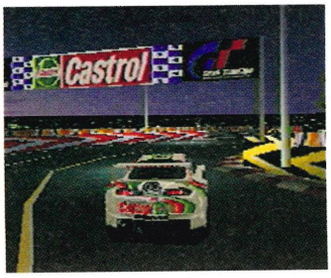
GT Hi-Fi Mode

The GT Hi-Fi isn't available until later on in the game, but it's worth working your way through the leagues for. It takes place on all five variations of the Special Stage, but with a difference. All of the scenery has been taken out to allow the game engine to run as fast as possible. This makes for some spectacular driving, but not racing. At this speed the PlayStation can't handle any other cars on the track, so it's just you, the open road and whole load o' speed.







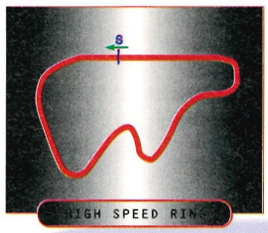


The Tracks

Gran Turismo offers over ten original tracks and track variations, but each track can also be reversed, making a total of over 20 different tracks. Each track requires its own driving style and it's possible to find certain cars that suit certain tracks. The Arcade mode offers eight of the main tracks from the game but at the start you only have access to four. All of these tracks can be found in Simulation mode, although some of them may have variations. Anyway, here they are...

High Speed Ring

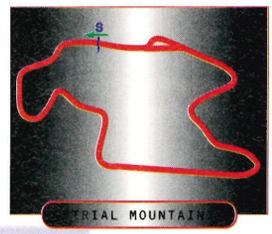
Length 3.1km
Difficulty . . . . . Novice



The High Speed Ring only offers up a few difficult corners in an attempt to ease you into GT's driving style. As the name suggest it's a very fast circuit and you only need to touch the brakes a few times when racing with a slower car. If you've got a top-of-the-range model, though, the High Speed Ring can become very perilous due to the fact that such massive speeds can be reached.

Trial Mountain

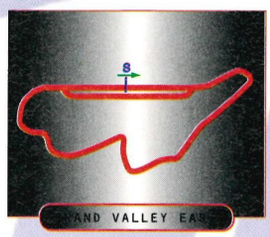
Length 3.9km
Difficulty . . . . . Amateur



The first stretch of the sumptuous-looking Trial Mountain track is a full speed sprint to get to the front. Once you reach the first tunnel, though, you'd better make good use of the anchors. The gorge section after the tunnel is a tricky winding road that takes you up to two high speed sections of tunnels and straights. Trial Mountain is a good introduction to GT's style of high speed cornering because most of the corners allow you to go through without braking - which is one hell of a hairy experience!

Grand Valley - East Section

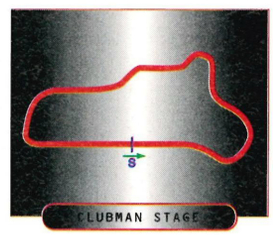
Length 3.0km
Difficulty . . . . . Amateur



The massive start straight on the Grand Valley track looks superb with its advertising hordings and packed-out stands. The track itself is where you can find some of the closest racing on Grand Turismo. It looks deceptively easy, but after a lap you realise that use of the brakes is most definitely required, especially on the first corner and the sharp corner leading into the tunnel - which, incidentally, makes use of some superb lighting effects.

Clubman Stage - Route 5

Length 2.4km
Difficulty . . . . . Amateur



The Clubman and Special stages are by far the most spectacular tracks in the game. They're set in a city at night which gives the game chance to show off more of its superb lighting effects. There are various incarnations of the Clubman and Special stages ranging from this, which is relatively straight forward to some wicked twisting and-turning raceways, that only the best will conquer.

Autumn Ring

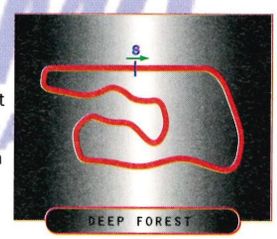
Length 2.9km
Difficulty . . . . . Pro



The full size Autumn Ring is a fantastic-looking, but very difficult course set out in the country. The first part of the course is relatively fast and easy, but as you reach the later stages of the lap you encounter some extremely dodgy corners. The mini version of the Autumn Ring is the smallest and one of the most enjoyable tracks in the game. It feels almost like a go-kart course because the laps are over so quickly and the racing is so tight. Unfortunately, you won't find the mini version on the arcade mode.

Deep Forest

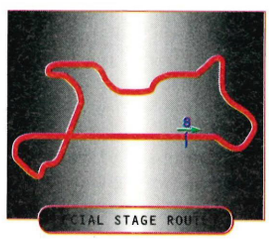
Length 3.5km
Difficulty . . . . . Pro



The Deep Forest track wings its way deep through a forest. Hmmm. Because the trees block out a lot of light you witness some amazing shadow effects on the track and on the cars. The course itself is a mix of winding road and sharp corners that give even the best GT drivers a run for their money.

Special Stage - Route 5

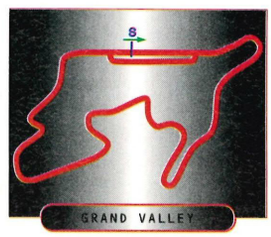
Length 3.7km
Difficulty. . . . . World Class



The Special Stage, like the Clubman Stage, is set at night in a brightly-lit city. The visuals here are second to none, but the track's so tough you rarely get chance to take in the gob-smacking visuals. This one of the toughest tracks in the whole game due to the devious positioning of corners and wicked overall track design.

Grand Valley

Length 4.9km
Difficulty . . . . . World Class



The full Grand Valley course is as big as it is challenging. It's filled with some of the toughest track sections in GT and like the Special Stage, only the best will be victorious. The extra section takes in some beautiful looking places such as a full suspension bridge and some excellent looking tunnels.

The Special Editions

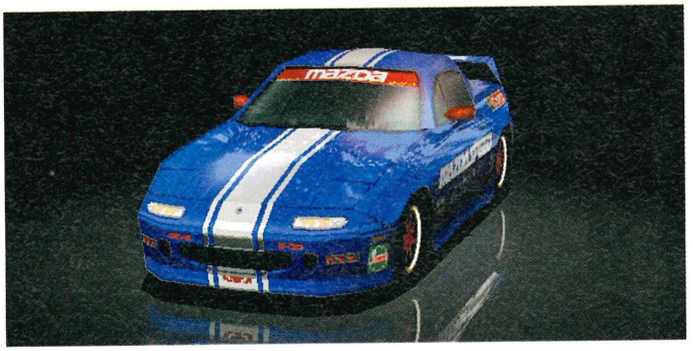
The Special Edition cars are the ones you really want to aim for. They cost quite a lot of cash, but once you have one you should be unbeatable. That's if you don't drive like Maureen out of The Driving School.



MITSUBISHI GTO LTD EDITION

Type 4WD
Power 650ps
Weight 1280Kg

The Mitsubishi is extremely powerful, but even though it's a four-wheel drive it doesn't handle very well and tends to get twitchy when going in a straight line. This is a professional's car only.



MAZDA RX-7 LTD EDITION

Type.....Front WD
Power 600ps
Weight 960kg

Although the Mazda lacks a little on power, it's very light so it gives the Mitsubishi and Honda a run for their money. The handling is also very solid even though it's a front wheel drive.



NISSAN NISMO GT-R LM

Type.....Front WD
Power 650ps
Weight 1140kg

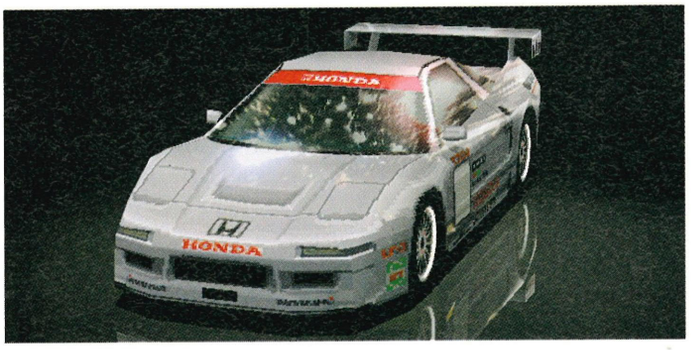
The Nissan is probably the best all-round special edition model due to its powerhouse engine and extremely solid handling. If you're looking for a safe bet, this is it.



SUBARU IMPREZA RALLY EDITION

Type 4WD
Power 585ps
Weight 980kg

The Subaru is the least powerful of all the special editions so you don't stand a chance on fast tracks such as the High Speed Ring. However, on the more corner-orientated tracks the Subaru's more than worthy of a victory. If you prefer handling over speed, get yourself one of these.



HONDA NSX-RGT

Type .....Rear WD
Power 600ps
Weight 1050kg

We love the Honda NSX. It's by far the sleekest, best looking car available car on GT but it's also one of the hardest to tame. It's weight/power ratio makes it very twitchy on corners. Still, it's the king of cars so it's worth forking out for.

Dual Shock Pad

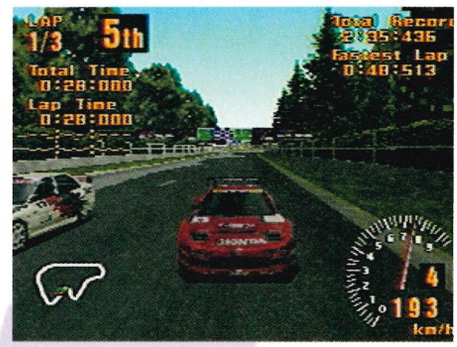
Gran Turismo is one of the first UK games that utilises Sony's brand-new Dual Shock Pad. We've been testing it out and can report it feels excellent, but only when you put it in your kecks. But seriously, the rumbling pad really does add to the feel of GT and we'd recommend that you invest in one of these pads just as soon as you can afford it. Even if you don't agree with us about the dual shock feeling, you've still invested in the most comfortable and ergonomic analog pad on the market.

The Performance Analyser

Part of the reason why Gran Turismo's so stunning is it's the first game to utilise the new Performance Analyser tool throughout its entire development. This tool allows programmers to analyse how much of the PlayStation is being utilised by the game. It can also work out which areas of the PlayStation are being under-used, allowing the programmers to optimise this area. This means that, at last, the full power of the PlayStation can finally be realised. Soon every game will use the Performance Analyser at the development stage, so it looks like Gran Turismo is set to kick off the third generation of PlayStation games.





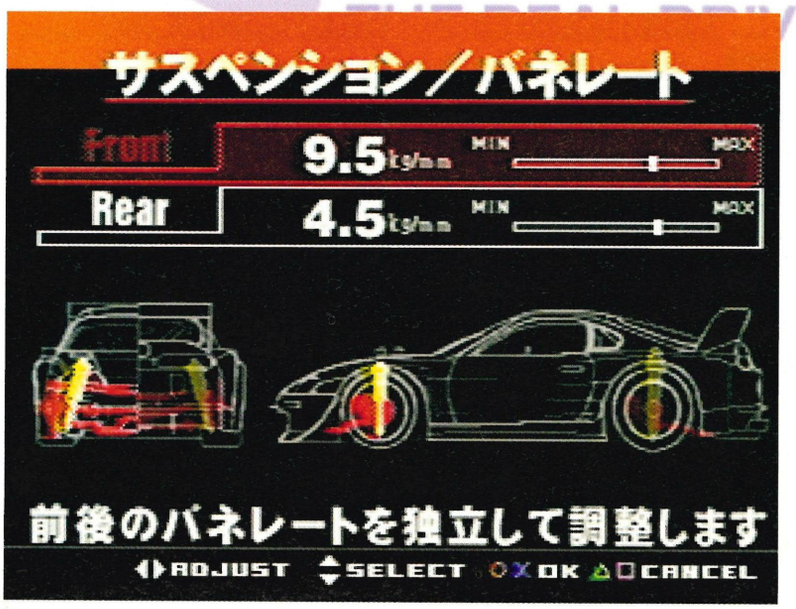


Spare Parts



One of Gran Turismo's most satisfying features is the way the cars can be tuned up. To do this, take a standard car and a whole wad of cash to the dealership and enter the parts section. Here you can choose to upgrade most of your major engine parts, brakes, suspension and even add a turbo kit or get a new paint job. Unlike other racing games that claim to have car upgrades, though, the upgrades on Gran Turismo do make a considerable difference to your car's performance. This is especially noticeable if you place a batch of sports parts into your engine and don't upgrade the suspension and brakes. In fact, the upgrades make such a difference to your car's performance you can buy a medium car, such as a Dodge Viper, spend a lot of cash on it and race competitively against the Special Edition cars in the GT World Cup. You'd be wise, however, to save your progress before you hit the garage so that you can always return to your car's previous state if your upgrades prove detrimental to performance.





Fine Tuning

Once you have your upgrades, it doesn't stop there. Before a race you can go to the Set-Up screen where you can change nearly all of your car's parameters. Unless you're a mechanic, though, this section is a little overwhelming. Things like camber, down-force, brakes and ride height can all be changed, so if you're not a car freak it's simply a case of trial and error. Lucky, then, you can make a test run before each race so you can get your car set up perfectly for the track.



exposed

Unlike Gamespotting, games covered here have arrived in the office in playable form. The versions we have here are unfinished and often full of bugs, but there's enough to give us a general idea of what the final game will be like. If you want to know what's coming up for review in the next few months, look here. We've a veritable mixed bag being previewed, with a shoot-'em-up, three footie games, a kid's platformer, two beat-'em-ups, a retro package and a strange virtual pet-type thing making up the numbers.

- adidas Power Soccer
- Atari Greatest Hits Volume 2
- Blast Radius
- Pet in TV
- Three Lions
- Tombi
- Vs.
- WCW Nitro
- World League Soccer

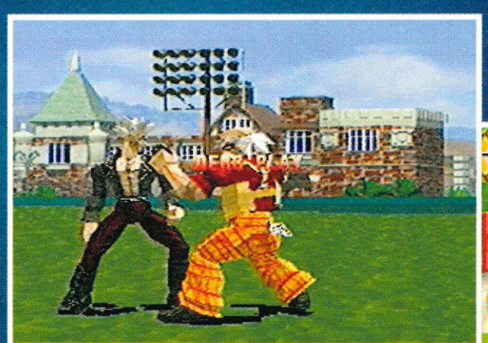


















Publisher - Eidos | Developer - Silicon Dreams | Release Date - May | Genre - Sports sim

World League Soccer

Only the strongest will survive...



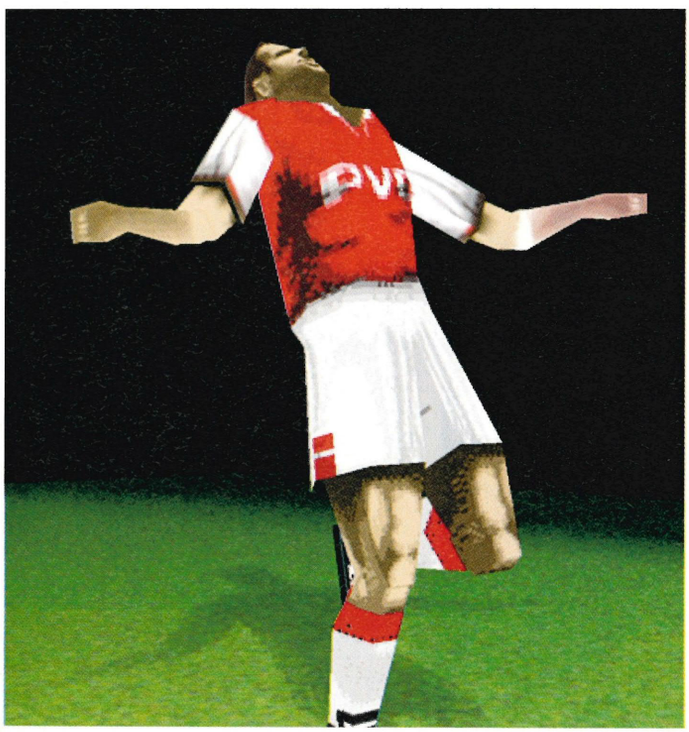
You don't need to be told again that sometime this year some football event's taking place somewhere in Europe. You only have to count how many footie sims are featured in this issue to gather that many publishers are trying to cash in on France '98. Word has it that across all formats a staggering 22 football sims will be released this year - only the best will survive! With new instalments of already established brands like ISS '98 and World Cup '98 (FIFA), and classy fresh appearances from Viva Football and the official England team game Three Lions, things are looking bleak for the rest.

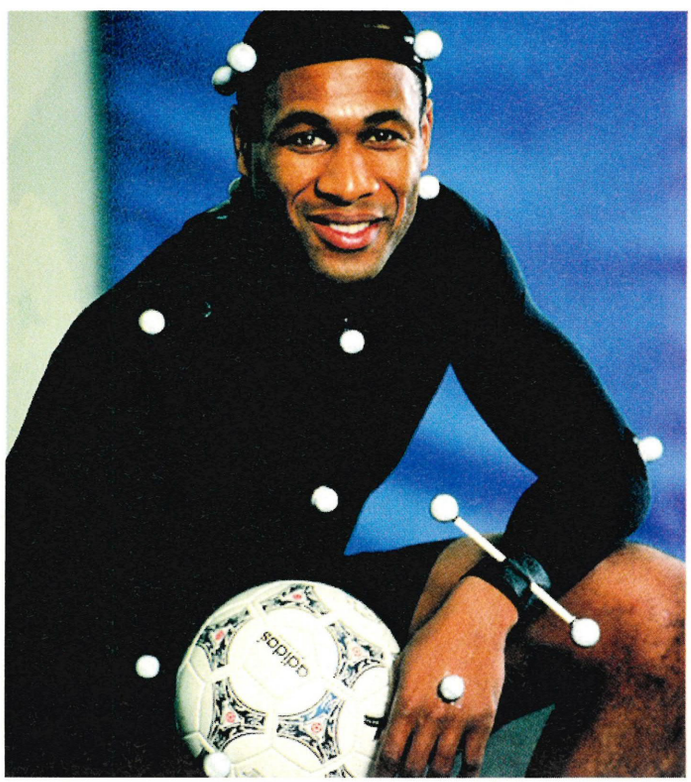
Cue World League Soccer. Eidos has a proud tradition of quality football titles and this isn't going to let the side down. Out of the four or five newies we've played so far, this has been the easiest to pick up and the most enjoyable, which isn't bad as the WLS preview copy we have is bugged to buggery. Some of the moves not yet included are Drone Player (computer AI takes control of player while you move into a good position, you can then decide when he passes), One-Two pass and Player Selection. Even with these major components missing you can still play an enjoyable and fast-paced game.



ON ME BALLS MATE

It's becoming the norm for footie games to take on the expertise of a top-flight footballer for the motion capture. World League Soccer has grabbed Les Ferdinand by the knackers and forced him to stick ping-pong balls all over his anatomy. Silicon Dreams also boast that WLS uses a new skeletal system which exploits large amounts of fluid motion-captured animation, giving the advantage of generating higher-resolution players. And to top this, UV texture mapping has been applied to enhance the players' visual characteristics, implementing muscle tone, facial features and detailed kit design.











When the aforementioned attributes are attended to, this already playable title should be easily receiving high praise.

There are over 190 teams from English, Italian, French, Spanish, German, Dutch, Scottish, American and Japanese leagues. The game at the moment is running at a minimum of 30 frames per second, and this will probably not improve. Weather effects include rain, wind, snow, and thunder and lighting, with games being able to be played either in the day or night. The commentary is supplied by Peter Brackley and Ray 'Butch' Wilkins, the boys from Channel 4's 'Italia Football'. The game includes a Save Game option available throughout the entire game. Little footie touches, just to make it that little more realistic, include waving corner flags and authentic goal net movement, with the all shadows being calculated in real-time. The crowds are animated, but in our version this isn't exactly breathtaking, although this will probably be doctored in the final rendition.



Team Tourneys...

World League Soccer will support the Multi Tap with a maximum of four-player simultaneous play. Analog will be supported, which is a 'must' nowadays for any comprehensive footie sim. Modes of play include International and Club Leagues, Tournaments and Exhibitions.

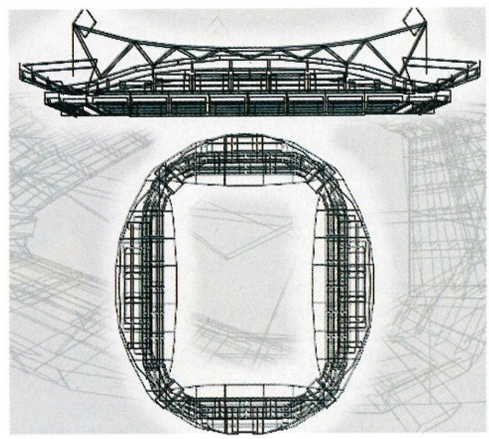
The press release boasts 'The game will feature a simple, yet intuitive control method', which isn't far from the truth. As we've already stated, this has got to be the one of the easier footie sims to pick up and play straight away. Passing is uncomplicated and accurate, enabling a fast-paced, good looking style of football. This is complimented by the fact that it's a bugger to score. You might be able to get up the pitch with five well calculated passes, but to get in the back of the net takes more than a simple kick into the bottom-right corner. After playing WLS for over an hour I (Dazza) had only scored once, but this is no complaint. Many sims have scorelines nearing the ten-goal mark, which isn't strictly representative. WLS brags excellent attack build-ups that don't always lead to a goal, but keeps the excitement 'in yer face' and realistic. When you've played WLS for a little longer you get more goals, although it's hard to score more than three in a single match, with the CPU only managing the same.

Hopefully, we will review WLS very soon, and if the promised improvements and removal of the bugs are implemented, WLS will definitely be up there as one of the premium football simulations of this year.

Let's finish this preview with an unbiased view from Rob Palfreman, producer of WLS. He told us, "The beauty of WLS is the fact that it doesn't place restrictions on the user. It reflects the way in which a real team builds up movement. The solid calculating methodology of the defence, the incisive and instantaneous explosion of the midfield and the exquisite power of the forward. The flow is what makes football an art and not a science. That is what WLS encapsulates".











Publisher - Sony Developer - Whoopee Comp Release Date - 2nd Quarter '98 Genre - Platform/ Adventure











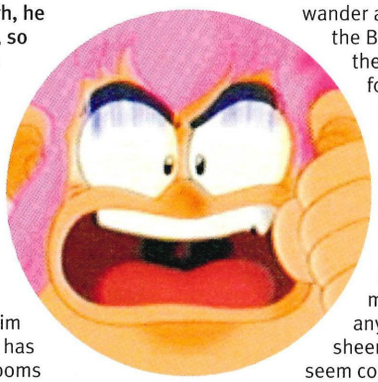
Tombi!

Potentially pukka pink punk platformer

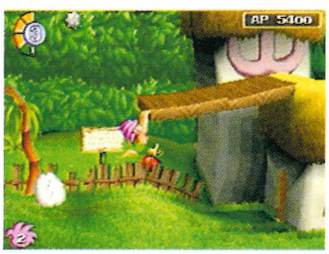


Mining a similar vein to Klonoa (exposed last month), Tombi! is the latest title aimed at the younger player, coming via the skills of Whoopee Comp. The hero is a luridly-coiffed cave boy drawn in the inimitable Japanese cartoon style who has taken on the quest to rid the world he inhabits of the Evil Pigs, a greedy, violent lot who have stolen his prized bracelet, and seem intent on robbing and pillaging wherever they go. Armed with his trusty blackjack (a nasty-looking spiky ball and chain), Tombi must run the gauntlet of these malicious porcine thugs who are intent on skewering him on their twin-pronged tridents. Mystifyingly, though, he can only stun them with this weapon, so the only way to send them packing is by jumping on their backs (surprise surprise) and then hurling them end-over-end, forming a useful impromptu missile.





Also after his hapless hide are vicious, egg-stealing birds, carnivorous Venus flytrap-type plants and huge floating jellyfish, all of which grab the nimble Neanderthal and either toss him across the screen or fly up and drop him from a great height. In later stages he has to deal with manic-depressive mushrooms and dozens of tribesmen in the deep jungle who swarm all over the poor chap if he touches down for too long. In his favour, though, Tombi! begins with four lives that have four strikes each, allowing younger players to avoid frustration through rapidly recurring deaths, which is useful as there's no shortage of malignant beasties and hazards spread throughout the landscape.



Dwarfs or Dwarves?

Beginning in a pastel-hued pastoral village, he quests through deep forest, high mountain tops (including a mad hurricane-strength crosswind), a village of dwarfs, lava caverns and a haunted mansion (not much like the one from Resident Evil 1, unsurprisingly). Throughout his mission, Tombi! comes into contact with a wide range of friendlier denizens who give him advice or criticism in the ever-entertaining 'Japlish' translation-language. Most point the way towards his objectives, such as "Gather all the baby chicks and bring them back here", and then heavily criticise his pink hairstyle (which is understandable as the game comes from a culture that makes schoolchildren dye their hair if it's not black enough). At certain points the view switches to an over-the-head Zelda-like effort as you wander around the dwarfs' home town and the Baccus (sic) Village, interacting with their fascinating inhabitants. Unusually for a platform-based game, Tombi can pick up and use objects to help him later on. The 'Normal Pants' he's wearing at the outset intriguingly implying he finds some superior, Abnormal Pants later on.

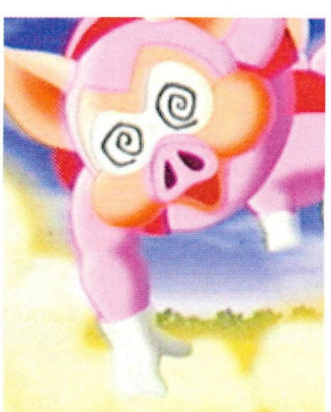
As you would expect, the graphics are cheerfully gaudy and cute to the point of fanaticism, moving sweetly and neatly without any fuss, although lacking the technical sheen of Klonoa at this stage. The FX seem competent but a little over-repetitive, as Tombi's leaps are punctuated by an annoying yip, while the music alternates between workmanlike Saturday morning fodder during the FMVs to the more loveable rhythmic ditties on the title screen and in-game (which is a bizarre but bouncy Hammond organ/steel drum duet).

As things stand Tombi! looks like being a resolutely Japanese title that strums at the same familiar but reliable platform game riffs. If this is to your taste, (or more likely your younger siblings), it should prove interesting, especially as it gently fuses elements from usually disparate styles of game.









Publisher - SCEE Developer - Sony of Japan Release Date - TBA Genre - Puzzle Game



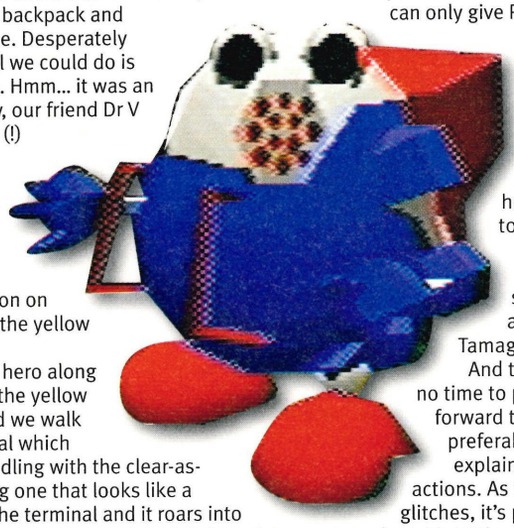




Pet in TV

Every now and then, as a disc arrives in the extreme PlayStation office with no fanfare, no hype and no information whatsoever. No press release, no release date, no instructions, no hyper-active software company rep telling us it's the best PSX game since their last one, nothing. Pet in TV is such a game, and it's arrived right on our deadline. Bear with us as we boot up the CD and try to make sense of it all...

First impressions were bloody confusing, to say the least. Our dome-headed chum walked around, taking things out of his backpack and building himself a house. Desperately banging the buttons, all we could do is change the perspective. Hmm... it was an animation. Not to worry, our friend Dr V the maintenance utility (!) promises to look at objects you bring him and to ease your woes if you're hurt. Nice fellow.



Dr V soon tells you to examine the recreation on this world by following the yellow path. Let's go...

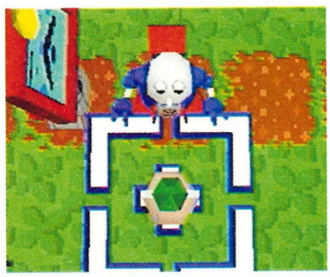
We take our intrepid hero along what we assume to be the yellow path, and lo and behold we walk into a computer terminal which looks like Dr V. After fiddling with the clear-as-mud icons and selecting one that looks like a pencil, your guy kicks the terminal and it roars into life. 'Practice mode' he cries - great, a tutorial. Complete a task on a given screen and the yellow exit appears, taking you further. Pressing Select brings up a rather confusing map. So far, so indifferent...

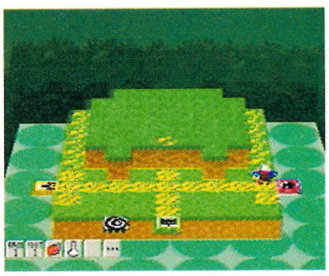
Confusing Creations

And so it goes on. Pet (we think that's his name, other than the one you choose to give him) must learn to kick down objects, lift things and put them on top of his head, eat and perform a variety of further functions. For some reason, he likes to sniff something he's just found - hope he doesn't come up against Saul's arse. You can only give Pet instructions - you have no direct control over his actions.

Pet seems to have a limited supply of energy, which he replenishes by going home and talking to the good doc or eating. There are neat eats to be found in the game, as well as the three he carries with him. When he gets too tired, he just sits on his backside, unable to move. You also have to keep him happy and stop him getting confused - it's like a cross between Lemmings and a Tamagotchi.

And that's about as far as we got. We've no time to press on further, but we're looking forward to playing the final version, preferably with a full set of instructions to explain the far-from-instinctive menus and actions. As the game is free from bugs and glitches, it's probably almost ready, so stay tuned - Pet in TV is coming soon, same time, same place, same channel.





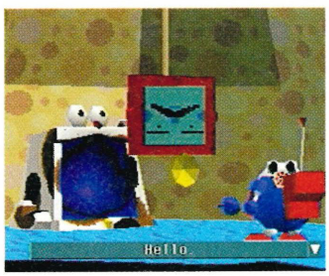


WAY-EYE-PETS

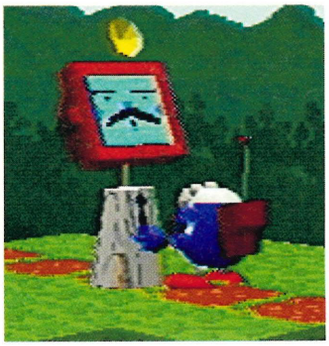
There are five Pets to choose from, each of which plays slightly differently due to differing personalities. These are:

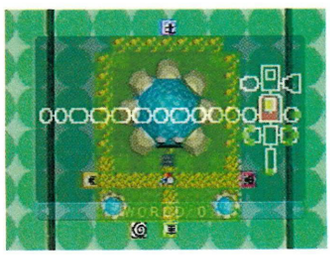
- TYPE #1: STANDARD TYPE, EASY TO HANDLE
- TYPE #2: LIVELY AND CHEERFUL
- TYPE #3: HONEST AND QUIET
- TYPE #4: SLIGHTLY OFF-BEAT AND ECCENTRIC
- TYPE #5: CAUTIOUS AND SENSITIVE









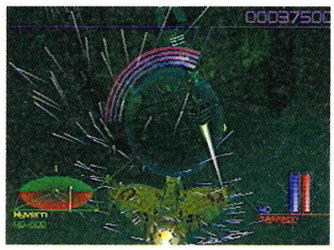


•Publisher- Psygnosis •Developer- In House •Release Date- 17th July •Genre- Shoot-'em-up

Blast Radius









Following last month's Gamespotting article, we've had the chance to play Blast Radius and we can safely say it's looking pretty hot. It's very, very reminiscent of Psygnosis' own Colony Wars, only the visuals have been upgraded to make Blast Radius one of the best looking, most solid games we've seen. To get these high quality visuals something had to be sacrificed, and in this case it's the strategy element present in Colony Wars. This makes Blast Radius a straightforward space shoot-'em-up, and we're a little worried the 'completely linear' (their words, not ours) mission structure may become too played out too soon.

However, Psygnosis aren't claiming that Blast Radius is a space opera-style game, like Wing Commander or Colony Wars. Blast Radius is simply a fast and furious arcade shoot-'em-up but what it does, it does extremely well.



Gone are the days when a space/flight sim involved taking a single pass at one target, then turning round within an hour to have another shot. These are the days of full-on space dog-fighting, with extremely controllable craft and extremely skilful enemy pilots. The action is very frenetic, with hordes of enemy ships swarming around you at any one time. Fortunately, you have access to a selection of weapons to bolt onto your ship. Unfortunately, you have to earn money from previous missions to buy these add-ons to your ship. You earn cash from each of your missions depending on your performance. This adds a little something to the straightforward shoot-'em-up fare, although it hardly makes it Wing Commander.

You play a character called Kayne, who is a sole survivor of the legendary Wolf Squadron (Starfox 64 anyone?). The Wolf Squadron were once protectors of the outer rim of the galaxy, but after a betrayal, the whole squadron, bar you, was wiped out. This has turned you into a money-grabbing space mercenary. On your travels you meet up with the Vorn, a peaceful race who are being attacked by the evil Kotan-Kai. Your drafted in to help out in the war and in exchange you're rewarded, and offered access to some of the most advanced weaponry and craft in the galaxy.

The game starts with a few basic missions, with the simple task of taking out the odd enemy fighter. As the game progresses, though, the missions become much more involved, such as taking out certain structures on space stations or escorting convoys through enemy territory. This type of mission is of course nothing new but Blast Radius doesn't rely on being original and ground-breaking. The onus is on pure space shoot-'em-up action. This is helped by the incredible visuals, but we'll have to wait until next month's review to find out whether the visuals and action are enough to make Blast Radius a worthwhile purchase.

The Ships

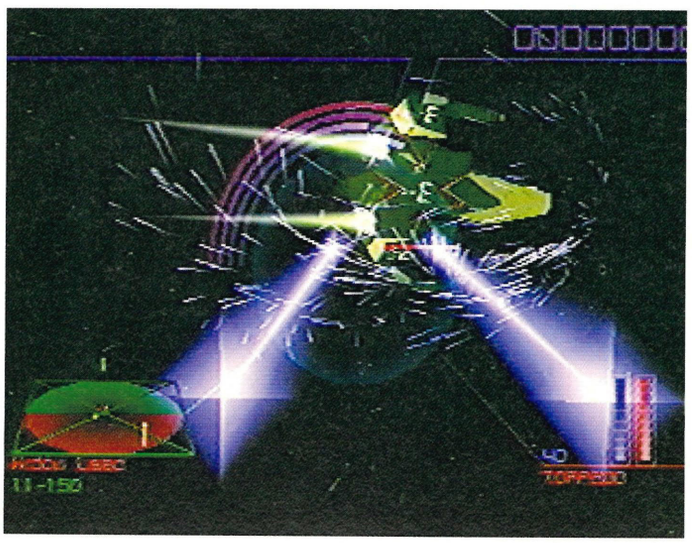
There are four different ships to choose from at the beginning of the game, but as you progress there are more at your disposal...

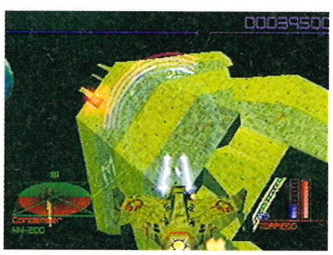


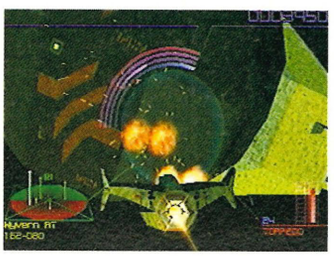








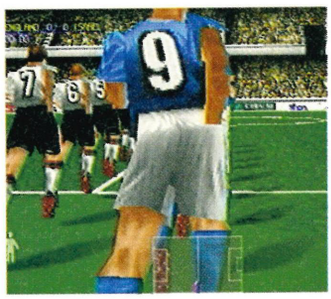






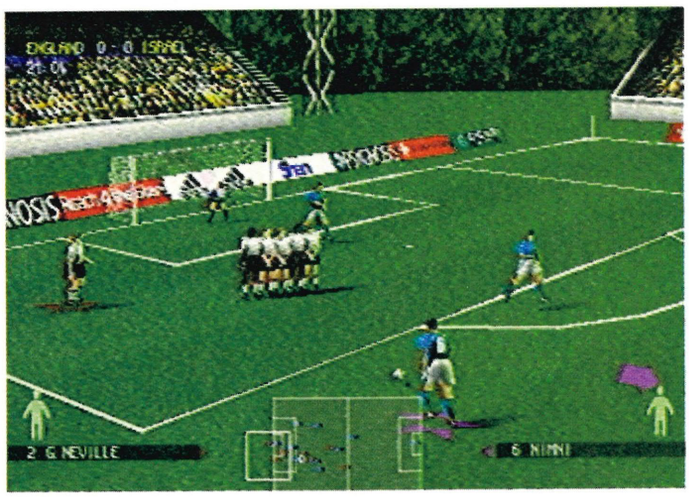
Publisher - Psygnosis Developer - Shen Release Date - 8th June '98 Genre - Sports Sim

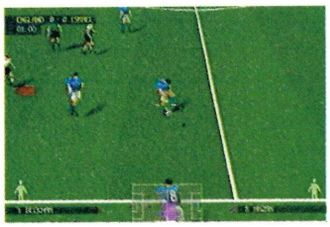
adidas Power Soccer '98



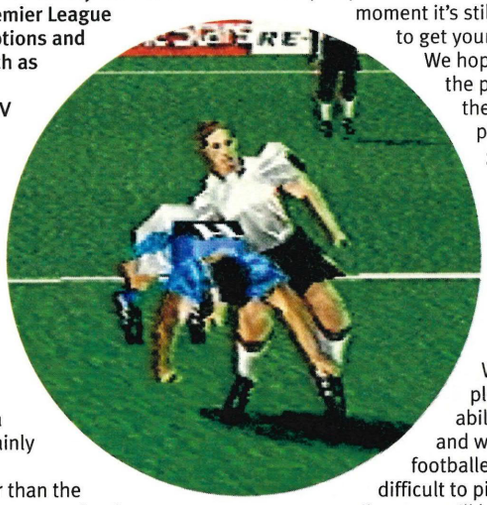
Ooooh, he's hit the post...







Flick over to Page 97 and check out our review of the original adidas Power Soccer, available on Platinum, and you'll see the '98 version has a lot of catching up to do if it's to put in a credible performance against the likes of Three Lions, Viva Football and World League Soccer. Luckily, even the most cursory of glances show it's hardly the same game. The presentation is Premier League material, with crystal clear options and menus, a wealth of extras such as camera angles and pitch conditions and a fantastic FMV sequence. Next to '98, the original adidas licence looks like a Spectrum game.



The proof of the pudding, though, is in scoffing it in the canteen at half time; all the FMV in the world won't turn a Vauxhall Conference game into a Premier League performer. How does adidas Power Soccer's upstart offspring play? It wouldn't be fair to assess the game from a preview disc, but we can certainly give a few early pointers.

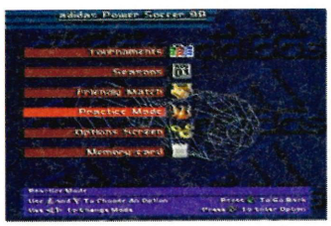
The controls are a lot firmer than the original game's, offering precise control rather than twitchy irritation - your player no longer dances around the field like an epileptic with itching power in his shorts as you try to intercept a goal-bound opponent, though they feel a little sluggish at present. The commentator doesn't seem as inconsistent as before, though he still states the obvious (yes, we can see 'it's a throw', pal). The sound FX for the ball need a little attention, though. At the moment it sounds like you're kicking a sheep's bladder while it's still in the sheep, and bounces hollowly across the pitch, there's a ridiculous delay between seeing it hit the floor and hearing the sound. Hopefully, Psygnosis will look into this before the game hits the shelves.

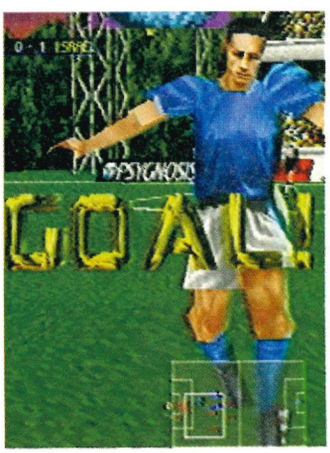
Candid Camera

The perspective is steadier than the original, but at the moment it's still a little mobile, making it tricky to get your bearings for the first few plays. We hope the level of grass detail on the pitch will be toned down too. On the preview version, its spotty pixels detract from the rest of the game. The player graphics are nowhere near as good as other footie games we've looked at this month, but they're certainly a big improvement on the earlier incarnation.

Individual players are named in aPS '98, and substitutions are catered for. We've yet to see whether each player has unique skills and abilities reflecting the strengths and weaknesses of the human footballer, though. Also, it's still a little difficult to pick your passes and goalkeepers still have a habit of 'saving' the ball just behind the line, conceding a goal.

adidas Power Soccer '98 is almost complete, but there's still time for Psygnosis to iron out a few of the flaws found in our preview version. With so many footie titles being released over the summer (we can't think why!), this time had better be well spent.

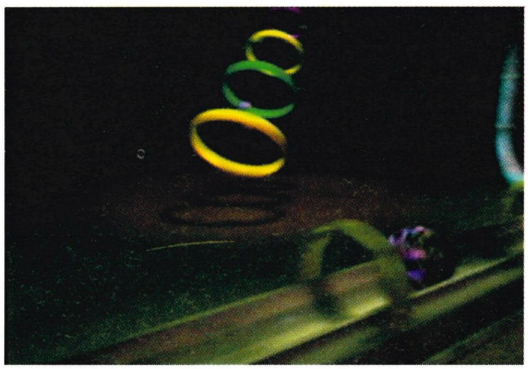




Publisher - GT Interactive Developer - Midway Release Date - April '98 Genre - Compilation

Atari Greatest Hits 2

Retro Freako

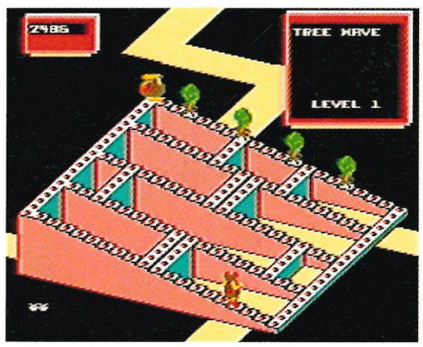


Back in the eighties the Atari marque held a similar status to that enjoyed by the Motown record label during the 1960s. They produced quality arcade games that were a classier cut above the rest of the field, creating new styles and innovating existing ones, much like the Detroit music stable. However, for both, after a heady Golden Age came the crash, both financially and creatively, that eventually led to the inevitable buy-out by a huge faceless corporation and a decline into laurel-resting and a predominantly bland output.

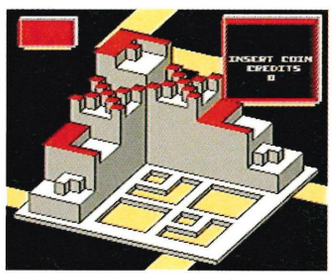
As most over the age of 20 will probably remember, in their heyday Atari produced some of the most playable, original and enjoyable coin-ops to grace the dingy portals of the video arcade, guzzling your ten-pence pieces and granting a few minutes of siliconised nirvana. Now, over a decade later, Midway have re-animated some of the more seminal titles, melding the original code into a PlayStation-agreeable form, letting you return to those almost-forgotten days of less than a few dozen colours and 8-bit sound and vision, all without the sustained loss of pocketfuls of loose change.

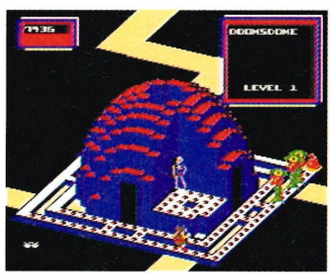
Crystal Castles

Crystal Maze



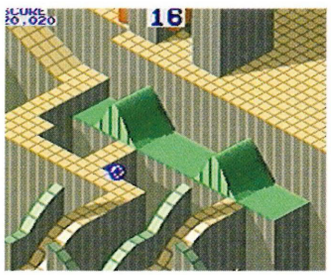
In a similar vein to that other dusty classic Q-Bert comes Crystal Castles, another game set in a pseudo 3D environment. Looking like a close cousin of Pac Man, you control what appears to be some kind of bear as he scuttles at great speed around a single screen maze, picking up crystals and avoiding the varying creatures that try to head you off at the pass. Darkened entrances lead to hidden short routes to the other side of the grid. Simplistic, but strangely compelling.



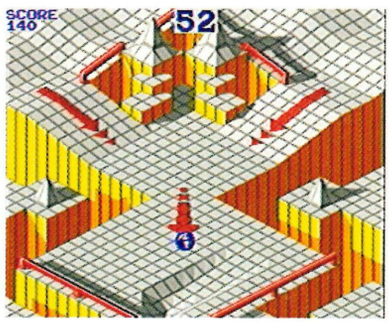


Marble Madness

Lose your Marbles



Another ground-breaking title (that puzzlingly only saw a few imitators) was Marble Madness. The goal of the game was to guide a marble through a series of increasingly fiendish landscapes within a tight and dwindling time limit, hindered by the sheer drops off the edges and numerous obstacles barring the way, such as slithering pools of acid, evil black marbles, jumping Slinkys and vacuum nozzles that suck you off course. The main problem, though, was the terrain itself, being a torturous succession of narrow ledges, ramps, hills, black holes and all manner of short cuts and traps that catch a player unawares.

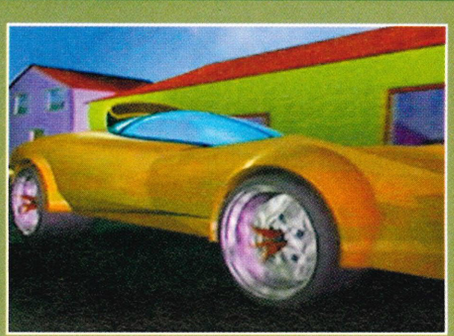


The splendid music is thankfully intact, and could teach modern soundtrack producers a thing or two about quirky and appropriate in-game tunes. As the original's trackerball control is of course now unfashionable, it thankfully has an analog option so the finesse demanded by the game can be achieved with silky-smoothness. Again a classic that would benefit from a 32-bit makeover for sure.

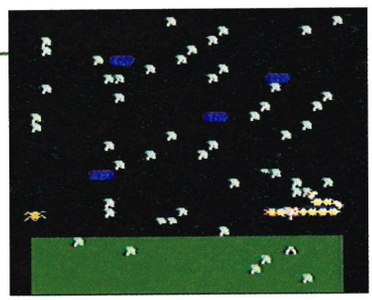
MOTION SLICKNESS







Millipede



Bugged Out

The follow up to the invertebrate-wasting joy that was Centipede comes Millipede, which looks and plays more or less identically to its progenitor, which is to say, great. A bit like an untethered Space Invaders, you control a gun that moves forward and back as well as left and right, meaning the enemies can pass behind you, leading to some tense moments as you dodge about desperately. The main opposition comes in the multi-segmented form of a millipede scuttling down the screen dodging the mushrooms scattered about the garden. Shooting it in the middle causes it to split in twain, doubling your problems, so tactical blasting is required as well as a swiftly pulsating trigger finger. Spiders zig-zag about, compounding the danger, while every so often a bee descends laying mushrooms behind it with a wicked "Beooow" noise that sounds just like a dread jungle bassline. Its sound FX are authentic old-skool bleeps and warbles that still sound rousing today. So eat lead, multi-segmented buggers!

Paperboy



BMX Bandit

Using an isometric viewpoint and some snazzy on-cabinet BMX handlebars set Paperboy out from the crowd of deep-space shoot-'em-ups that profused the scene a decade ago, plus of course its quirky and unusual scenario. Taking the role of a hapless newspaper-tossing kid on a bike, your task is to hoy the periodicals onto subscriber's porches or even better into their mailbox while avoiding the dangerous denizens that roam the neighbourhood.

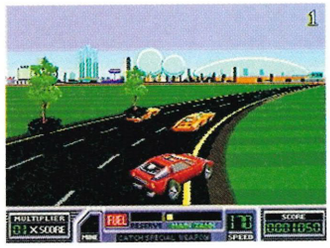
The hazardous suburb is a terrible place to be on a bike, with radio-controlled cars, trike riders, dogs, brawling men and even the Grim Reaper getting in the way. Get to the end of the street, though, and you can try your skill on the high-speed BMX track, replete with targets to aim spare papers at for bonuses. With its droll mock-up headlines trumpeting your success (or most likely failure), Paperboy has an engaging wit and charm even after all this time, in spite of its actually-quite-tough difficulty level.



Road Blasters

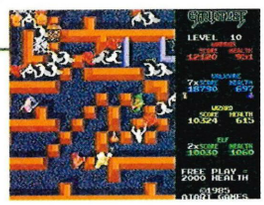
Road Hash

Last and probably least comes Road Blasters, a drive and shoot game I must admit I caned heavily when it came out, but it definitely looks a bit ropey now. The basic task is to drive down a road shooting orange cars, avoiding armoured purple ones and roadside turrets and occasionally picking up weapons upgrades dropped from a passing aircraft. State of the art at the time of release, it looks ever so dodgy now, and the control system doesn't seem to have been ported over very well, though this could change in the final version. It seems to have been tacked on to the other major games on this compilation to make up the numbers, to be honest, as the game has very little personality to play or look at.





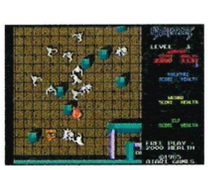
Gauntlet



Warrior, You Are About to Die.

First and most exciting is the return of the granddaddy of every Multi Tap game, Gauntlet. On its original appearance it caused a major stir as its four-player action brought a new dimension of teamwork to gamers usually used to taking on a single human opponent. Now the need of the many was greater than the one, so co-operation and group tactics became the watchwords.

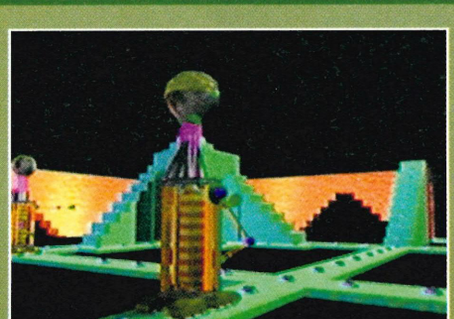
Taking control of either a nimble Elf, Vixen, Valkyrie, fireball-lobbing Wizard or muscle-brained Warrior, the object is to navigate a never-ending series of maze-like levels infested with swarms of ghosts, sorcerers, Neanderthal grunts and other assorted nasties that home in on the party relentlessly, with monster generators spewing out fresh foes until they're destroyed. The action's fast and frenetic, and the inter-team dialogue usually insistent and profane, as the team hunted for the food, magic potions and keys allowing them to progress. Of course, the best (and cleverest feature as far as arcade owners are concerned) is if a character's low on energy a few ten pees could restore him or her to glowing health, and this has been ported over to the home version, meaning that death can be delayed almost indefinitely if you so wish. This version looks and plays virtually identically to the stand-up machine at this stage, so get your mates and four controllers ready!



Retro-nostalgics will no doubt be drawn to this collection, as will curious youngsters or those that want to perversely transform their PSX into the equivalent of a steam-powered computer. Be warned though, sentimentalism for the otherwise culturally blighted Eighties era is a dangerous disease that must be brutally stamped out. Mark my words...

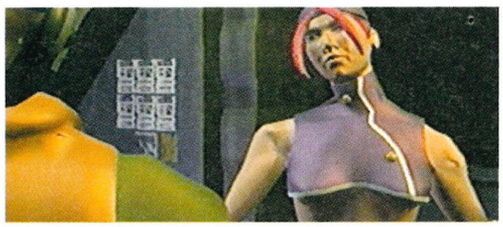
The Intro FMV wryly incorporates the hoary old games in a bang-up-to-date movie that melds them all together:







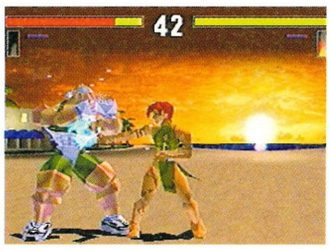
Publisher - THQ | Developer - In House | Release Date - 12th June 98 | Genre - Beat-'em-up

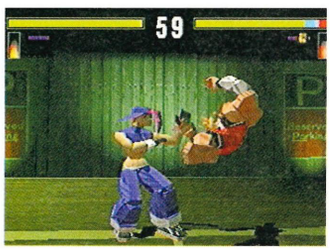


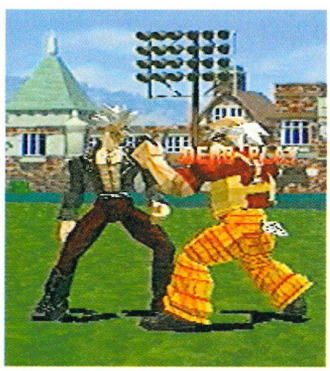
Vs



D'you wanna be in my gang, my gang, my gang...







Taking its cue from seminal 80s gang rumble and bad haircut flick The Warriors is Vs from THQ, a fighting game with a novel twist in its fist. In place of the usual dressing-gowned martial artists, you take control of various LA street thugs from rival gangs, who are a lot more colourful than your usual pixel pugilists, and slug it out amongst gritty and unusual urban arenas. The four available gangs include The Hood, Street, Beach and Campus, and are reflected in the appearance and style of the four fighters available in each, who appear to be a wide range of genuinely-researched stereotypes. For example, the Street characters include a crop-topped girl Rave DJ, a behemoth taxi driver, a quiffed Club Kid and best of all a high-rolling pimp, complete with feathered fedora. On the other hand, the Campus gang (as such) is from the more intellectual arm of brawling, possessing amongst their number a mad professor type, a bespectacled, karate-kicking nerd and the charming schoolgirl and cheerleader characters, who understandably get picked the most often in the office (see boxout for reasons why).

Despite the fighters' high street credibility traditional martial arts styles such as Kung Fu, Tae-Kwon-Do and Aikido are dominant (with the exception of the hulking pro-wrestlers), plus some more vaguely-defined disciplines such as 'various martial arts' and 'street fighting' that are an amalgam of everything under the smogged-out sun.

Some fighters share styles, meaning it's easy to swap between them, but effectively this means there are only eight different systems between the 16 characters, which hints at some potential short-changing in the long-term variety stakes. Turf wars can be fought in a widely-ranging number of different locations depending on the gang picked; the Beach gang slug it out by the seaside (unsurprisingly), but also scrap in the atmospheric Malibu Canyon and on a sunny Miami boardwalk, while the Hood-based set have less glamorous arenas such as an empty subway station, Chinatown and a playground directly under the property price-dropping flight path of an Air Force base, complete with an authentic loose basketball. An elevator on a construction site, an enclosed car park and a cheesy disco are the Street Gang's stomping grounds (literally), while the bookish Campus crowd slug it out on the stadium field and the library roof. At this point, though, some of the stages don't look fully complete, but those that do are on the favoured side of interesting as violence venues go, whilst not appearing to be particularly interactive as far as possibly affecting the outcome of the fight (unlike Cardinal Syn, say).

Brisk 'n Deadly

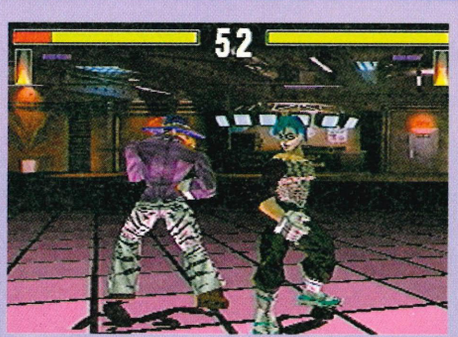
The Fighters themselves run at a brisk 50 frames a second, which helps keep the pace of things quick and deadly, but at the cost of a few polygons, making the protagonists look a bit blocky around the edges at points, in particular their calves, which for some reason are huge and distended on some of the fighters. However, speed is always the essence in beat-'em-ups, so the sacrifice is a sensible trade-off allowing for the excellent motion-captured movement and real-time lighting effects that show up from level to level.

The fighting itself seems a lot less button-tiful than a lot of titles, having just Punch and Kick attacks and an Evade move that scoots you sideways with some help from the D-Pad, plus of course it's possible to slave controls together to create grabs and combinations, but the number of permutations available are bound to be less than something like Tekken 3, say, which uses every possible button on the controller to its max. The limited moves list THQ provided doesn't hint at the more complex manoeuvres, so no clues there as to what the ultimate playing scope of Vs will prove to be. All the expected grapples, throws and combo flurries appear to be present and correct at this stage, while certain strikes can cause the victim's skeleton to buzz painfully with electricity. Apparently there is also a

MEAN STREETS



This basketball court forms an ideal fenced-in venue for Jalil the homeless Tae-kwon-Do expert to trample his hapless foes under foot.



"D, I, S, C, O..." Mineo the Mime squares up to Slim Daddy on the tastefully underlit dance floor. Let's just hope he doesn't attempt the 'Trapped in a Glass Box' move.



"Up on the roof..." the city is far below and sheathed in mist, but Leath doesn't care as she gives gang cohort Harold an eyeful. Wa-hey!

'sophisticated proprietary defence/offence gameplay engine' which sounds so interesting we had to look it up in the dictionary. Unfortunately the producers failed to bestow us with the instructions on how to operate this no-doubt impressive feature, so any blocking carried out was random and unexpected, and accordingly the finer points of the system went unnoticed.

Most modes of play are catered for, such as Vs the CPU or a human, one- or two-player Rumble (basically Team play), Survival and Challenge, where gang-mates can fight one another for supremacy over their homiez. Victory over all the members of a rival gang leads to taking on the Secret Gang Bosses, who upon defeat can be added to your roster of available characters; again no surprises there. Sound FX so far are the usual punch-tuative yelps and whoops (apart from Slim Daddy the pimp's Superfly "Yeaooowh!" when he's struck), while the accompanying music comes from "awesome emerging LA rock artists such as Razed in Black, Los Infernos, Suicide Machines and Pigs in Space". The verdict? Sub-Nine Inch Nails cack to a man. A bonus game is also included on the loading screen, but don't get too excited - it's a digital reproduction of one of those shuffle-tile games where a square is missing from a picture and you have to re-arrange all the pieces until it's whole again. The prize for successfully completing it is... nothing at all. Still, it's better than figuratively twiddling your thumbs.

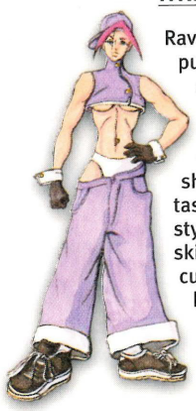
Fisticuff Romp

These possible grumbles aside, Vs threatens to be a unusually-flavoured toe-to-toe fisticuff romp that takes the same kind of line as say, Bloody Roar, concentrating on hard-hitting no-nonsense brawling rather than elegant positioning and flowery attacks. If the control system turns out to have greater depth than is now apparent, it could prove to be a contender, especially as its nifty design and cool characters are complimented well by the game's pleasingly swift pace. Just stay off its patch, okay man?



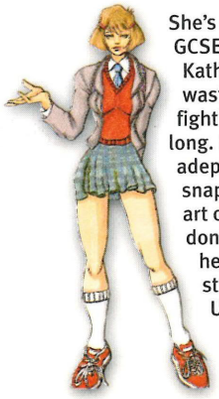
RUMBLE PACK

MIA



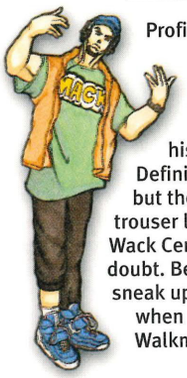
Rave DJ Mia can pull a mean spinback and is sharp on the cut, and if you dis her mixing she gives you a taste of her Pi-Kua style Kung Fu skills. A funky customer who's happiest with a deck in each hand.

KATHLEEN



She's still got her GCSEs to finish, so Kathleen can't waste her time fighting for too long. Luckily, she's adept at the joint-snapping martial art of Aikido, so don't be fooled by her slight stature. Uniform's definitely a distraction, though.

RAMOS



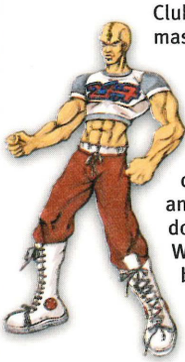
Proficient in no-holds-barred street fighting, Ramos is a rapper in his spare time. Definitely a dope G, but the rolled-up trouser leg is bound for Wack Central without a doubt. Best tactic is to sneak up and twat him when he's on his Walkman, like here.

LEITH



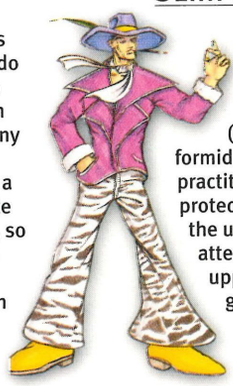
Cheerleader Leith has fortunately left her pom-poms at home so there's nothing between her fists and an opponent. A fusion of styles makes her good all round, but her high-kicking style is especially jaw-breaking (and gusset-flashing).

VICKRAM



Club Kid Vikram has mastered both Aikido and Kung Fu so he's one tough dude. His many fashion blunders hide a dedicated athlete and martial artist, so don't laugh at his Wonder Woman boots and Tin Tin hairstyle.

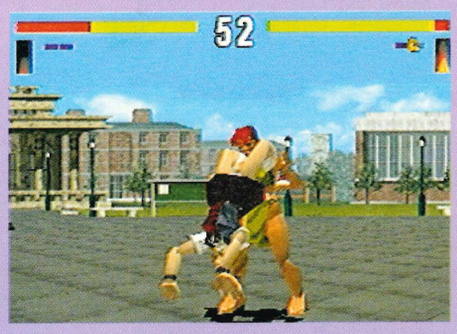
SLIM DADDY



The flyest honky on the street is a 'businessman' (ahem) and a formidable Karate practitioner, so he can protect his bitches from the unwanted attentions of any uppity johns or other gang members muscling in on his territory.



As the construction site elevator grinds ever higher, clubber boy Vikram gives his foe a real shock. Nice pair of trainers on both of them as well.



Outside that esteemed place of dignified study and knowledge, the campus library , Kathleen pulls an interesting manoeuvre on aggro tattoo artist Kara. Steady on old girl!



A beautiful azure summer sunset is totally ignored as heavyweight Kenny gets up close and personal with his Beach Gang colleague on their home, er, turf.

Publisher - BMG | Developer - Z-Axis | Release Date - May | Genre - Sports sim

Three Lions:

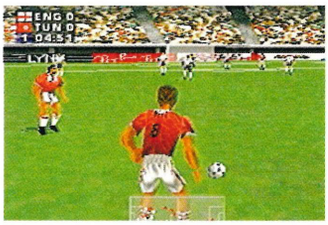


The Official England Team Game

Aslan, Parsley and Leo?















Pinocchio, Richard Nixon, OJ Simpson; oh, you said Three LIONS? Sorry, I thought you wanted Three LIARS. Anyway, The Three Lions is a pub located halfway down the High Street...

Enough silliness; let's look at the game. With World Cup fever spreading like a rumour on a daytime soap opera, the footie sims are coming in thick and fast; thicker, in fact, than Vinnie Jones and faster than the Arsenal team at opening time. If you want a soccer game you're spoilt for choice, so what makes Three Lions stand out from the obscenities-chanting crowd?

For a start, it has the England licence. Hopefully this won't mean it's out of the running after the first round, though. It will take more than a snazzy licence which cost the equivalent of David Beckham's weekly wage to put Three Lions at the head of the pack, so what has it got to send it over the moon and leave its opponents as sick as a parrot? Over to you, BMG...

The game features over 50 international teams from past and present, from England's triumphant side of '66, through the glorious Brazil sides of the 70s to the up-and-coming hungry tigers from the Orient. The usual tournament and friendly options are there, and you can play in one- or two-player mode.

Vociferous Vocals

The usual match commentary, which BMG describe as 'tedious' and 'looped', has been omitted in favour of banter between the players and the referee. The company also boasts other innovative features for the game, including 'instant aim and shoot targeted shooting, which explains the bull's-eye targets in the goalmouths (in case you were wondering). Cancel that half time archery session. One touch passing is also catered for, though to be honest it would be more surprising if it wasn't. The same goes for mid-game tactical changes too. The graphics are motion captured (quelle surprise), but Z-Axis didn't stop there. The players' faces are rendered, and their sizes accurately represented. You can field a team of midgets or giants if you wish.

Although by no means a management sim, accurate representation of the players and the ability to chop and change during the game gives Three Lions a certain amount of tactical depth. You can pick the team from your available squad, but not the squad itself. If your tactics aren't working out, try something else.

So, in a nutshell, what will Three Lions have with other games don't? The game's director, Gordon Bellamy, says, "Too many of the recent soccer games released for the consoles simply aren't involving enough. We went back to the real source - real football. I have played it all my life, and wanted to make a game which actually feels like you are playing a game with your favourite players rather than just watching it on TV". Lofty aims. He continues, "Equally, I wanted a game that didn't rely on people's ability to remember 85 key combinations. Three Lions is very easy to play, but very hard to master, as what separates the good from the great in this game are the qualities that make good footballers; skill, timing, experience and tactical understanding".



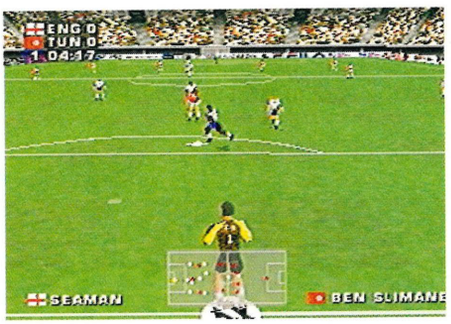
The summer period will see the PlayStation swamped with more football games than Manchester United have change strips, so it's inevitable this preview will close with a clichéd comment about Three Lions needing to be something special to lift itself above the quagmire of soccer simulations. It isn't the only game to use a 3D perspective - they pretty well all do. It isn't the only game to boast classic teams from the past - Virgin's Viva Soccer does too. It isn't even the only game to offer a licence - Electronic Arts have the tournament licence. The battle for this year's top soccer sim will be a game of two halves, requiring keen gameplay and a hot marketing campaign. Three Lions is fearsomely well presented and extremely playable, but only time will tell whether it can lift itself above the plethora of PlayStation kick-arounds.

Oh, and before you get excited, Paul Merson, it's Three LIONS, not Three LINES.

IT'S YOUR BALL...

Goal kicks offer an excellent control system. You move around the circle which indicates control of a player - if there's a player on it, he moves with it. If you move it out of his way, the nearest team mate to the circle runs towards it. Thus you choose who you pass the ball to, but are able to let a player run onto it instead of booting it to his feet all the time.







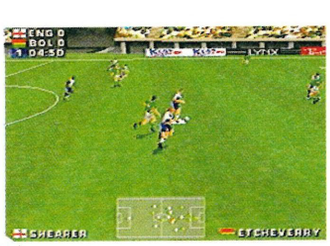


RECOGNISE THESE FAMILIAR (IF UGLY) FACES?

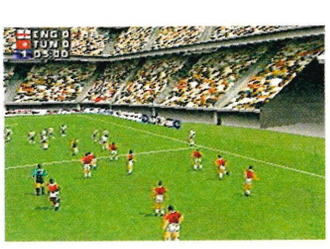


SHERINGHAM'S ATTEMPT AT OLYMPIC PISTOL SHOOTING FAILED TO HIT THE TARGET, BUT LEFT THE OPPOSITION FOR DEAD...











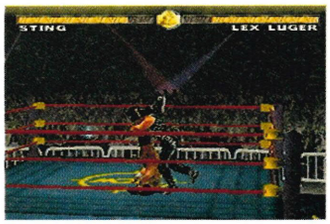
ENGLAND FOR THE CUP

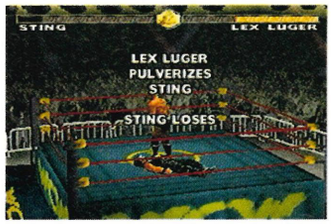
England are bound to lift the trophy this year. Here's why...

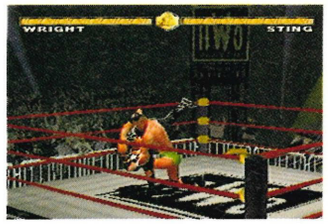
England (1966)
Brazil (1970)
Germany (1974)
Argentina (1978)
Italy (1982)
Argentina (1986)
Germany (1990)
Brazil (1994)
??? (1998)

Publisher - THQ | Developer - Inland | Release Date - 19th June | Genre - Beat-'em-up









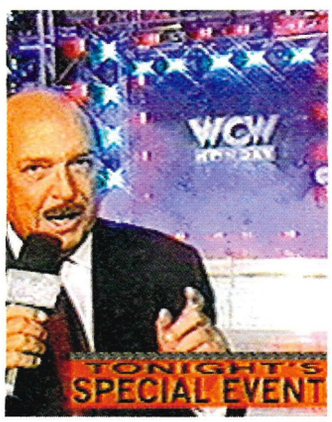
WCW/NWO Nitro

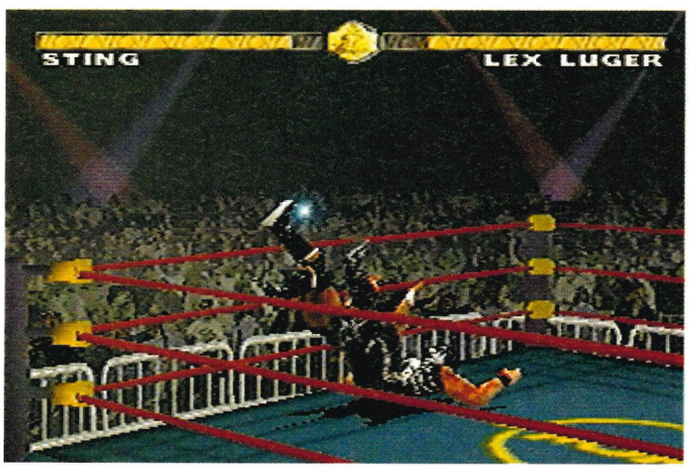
WCW, for years overshadowed by the WWF, turned itself around by hiring the athletically-limited fan favourite Hulk Hogan. When out-of-contract Scott Hall and Kevin Nash joined, the company launched its best gimmick for years; the NWO. While in theory this is an organisation within an organisation, the bad guys going their own way, in practice it's just a WCW storyline - all NWO wrestlers are employed by WCW. As gimmicks go, though, it makes a great theme for a wrestling game...

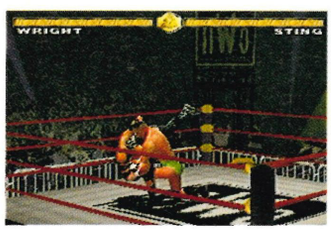
With so many fighters available and an advertised 30+ context-sensitive moves per character, isn't there a danger gameplay will degenerate into semi-controlled button-bashing, with the game and not the player deciding which move is executed? THQ say not. "It's context-sensitive", says PR Manager Asam Ahmed, "but the moves are clear. After a few plays you get used to stringing moves together. The player is always in control".

As well as top wrestling superstars, the game also boasts Santa Claws, a slug and various managers and back-room boys associated with the sport. There are also the inevitable hidden arenas and graphical oddities such as big heads, big feet, big hands and other such funnies.

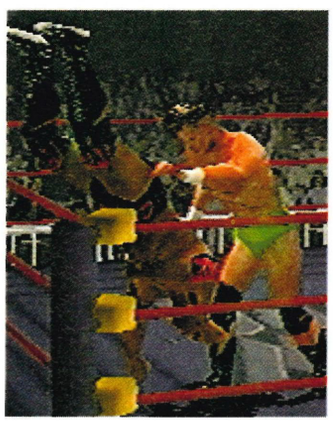
WCW/NWO Nitro looks a gripping grappler so far, but only next month's review will tell whether it wins the pinfall or suffers the three-count. Dust off your Lycra leggings in anticipation...

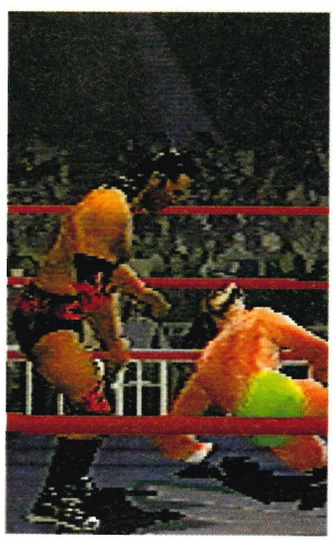














Is Wrestling Fixed?

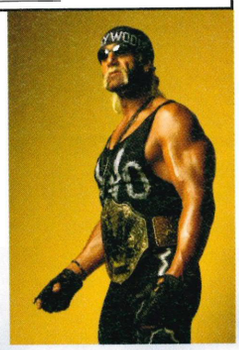
In his 1985 biography 'You Grunt, I'll Groan', legendary wrestler of the Sixties and Seventies Jackie 'Mr TV' Pallo said, "In nearly 35 years I can hardly remember fighting a straight fight, and I have seldom heard of a straight pro fight". He goes on to explain how bouts are fixed to provide maximum viewing spectacle, and how many pro-wrestling moves are impossible to achieve without your 'victim' helping.

Naturally, WCW would never do this - and if you believe that, you'll believe anything.

MEET THE BONE BENDERS

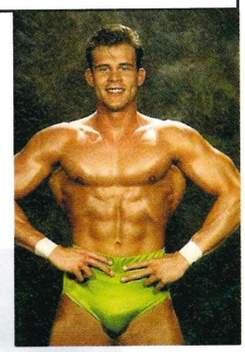
Alas, Brett Hart joined WCW too late to be included in the game, but here's a run-down on some of the game's main grapplers...

HOLLYWOOD HULK HOGAN



Real Name: Terry Bollea
Affiliation: NWO
Height: 6'7"
Weight: 275 lbs
Signature Move: Big Boot/Atomic Leg Drop
Hogan came out of retirement in 1994, bursting onto the WCW scene in his usual yellow and red outfit. His all-American image was well past its sell-by date, though, and when Kevin Nash and Scott Hall jumped ship and joined WCW from the WWF, the three wrestlers joined forces and formed the NWO, an organisation within an organisation. A ruthless businessman, Hogan is the highest-paid wrestler in the biz, though his physique is well below the steroid-induced muscularity of the late Eighties. His in-ring performances are overshadowed by his interviewing technique too.

ALEX WRIGHT



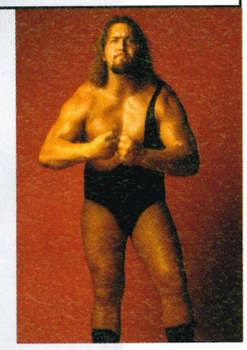
Real Name: Alex Wright
Affiliation: WCW
Height: 6'4"
Weight: 225 lbs
Signature Move: Spinning Leg Lariat
Although not overly blessed with charisma and interviewing skills, the 21-year-old from Nuremberg, Germany is an incredible flier. Nicknamed 'Das Wunderkid', Wright was discovered by WCW in 1994 when injury sidelined several touring wrestlers while the company was putting on several supercards in Germany. He soon wowed the crowds with his high-flying, high-risk Moves. He can't match some of his contemporaries for power, though.

DEAN MALENKO



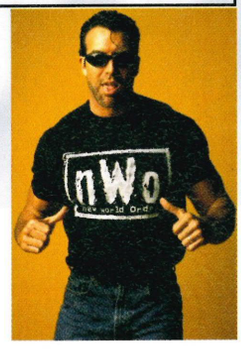
Real Name: Dean Simon
Affiliation: WCW
Height: 5'9"
Weight: 216 lbs
Signature Move: Texas Clover Leaf
During the wrestling boom of the late eighties, the phrase 'it's not the size that counts' was alarmingly inappropriate. Top bone-benders were all over 6'5" and built like two brick shithouses. There was no room at all for the little guys, however talented. Thankfully, this is no longer the case and spectacular athletes like Dean Malenko are preferred to one-move wonders like Sid Justice, the Natural Disasters and the Ultimate Warrior. Jolly good thing too - Malenko isn't called 'The man of 1,000 holds' for nothing.

THE GIANT



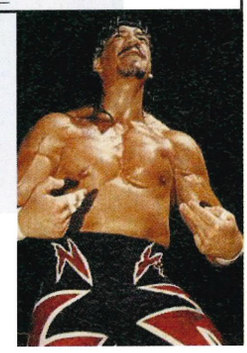
Real Name: Paul Wight
Affiliation: WCW
Height: 7'4"
Weight: 450 lbs
Signature Move: Choke Slam
The Giant was originally marketed as the son of the late, great Andre the Giant. He's nothing of the sort, but he's a superbly charismatic wrestler who, despite his tender years (he's 25), is able to carry the ageing embarrassment Hulk Ho-Hum in a supercard headlining bout. He was one of the youngest ever WCW World Champions, and prevailed in the 60-man Battle Royal at the recent World War 3 pay-per-view. According to THQ, at six years old he was taller than his 4'11" kindergarden teacher.

SCOTT HALL



Real Name: Scott Hall
Affiliation: NWO
Height: 6'7"
Weight: 282 lbs
Signature Move: Outsiders' Edge
Founder of the NWO, the former Razor Ramon teamed with Nash to form The Outsiders tag team. The NWO is marketed as a rival wrestling organisation at war with WCW, and is the company's most successful gimmick, putting arses on seats all over the United States. 'NWO 4 life'!

EDDY GUERRERO



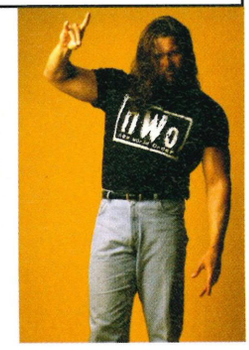
Real Name: Eddy Guerrero
Affiliation: WCW
Height: 5'9"
Weight: 205 lbs
Signature Move: Frog Splash
Another of the new generation of smaller wrestlers, Eddy learned his bone-bending skills from his father, the great Gory Guerrero. His four older brothers, Chavo, Mando and Hector, are all professional wrestlers too. Hailing from El Paso, Texas, Eddy Guerrero spent his early career bending bones in Mexico and Japan, territories where true bone-bending is more respected than interview skills.

SYXX



Real Name: Sean Waltman
Affiliation: NWO
Height: 6'1"
Weight: 210 lbs
Signature Move: Buzz Killer
Is this the worst name in pro-wrestling? Before signing with WCW, Sean Waltman was The 1-2-3 Kid in the WWF. Syxx? That's what 1, 2 and 3 add up to (ugh!). Syxx isn't a power wrestler, but instead relies on acrobatic ability and super-fast speed to topple his opponents.

KEVIN NASH



Real Name: Kevin Nash
Affiliation: NWO
Height: 7'1"
Weight: 367 lbs
Signature Move: Truckstop Powerbomb
Formerly Diesel in the WWF, Nash arrived with Scott Hall, with whom he formed a tag team, The Outsiders. Their out-of-the-ring interviews, strongly hinting they were there on behalf of the WWF, brought lawsuits from the rival promotion. It also provoked the WWF into repackaging two wrestlers still on their books as Nash and Hall's former characters, Diesel and Razor Ramon.

This is a Journey

Love it or hate it, the face of videogame music is changing. Machines have become more powerful, storage potential has risen, publishers have become more confident and musicians are more clued-up to your needs. The result, an exciting new era in videogame music that's set to take us into the millennium and beyond...

Rhythm is Rhythm

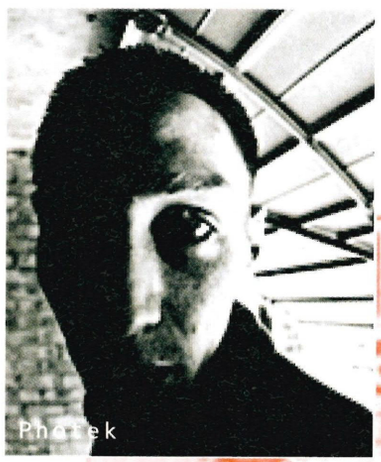


You may find it hard to believe, but there was a time when there was no such thing as videogame music. With the standard of today's PlayStation audio experience you'd imagine these dark ages were a long, long time ago. The truth is, though, that little more than twenty years ago, the only sound heard on videogames was the 'kerchunk' of the ten pence dropping in and a few odd bleeps and blips. It hasn't taken long to get to the standard of today's stereophonic, Dolby Surround Sound, aural orgasmic sounds of the PlayStation soundtrack.

It's only now videogame music is worthy of note, unless of course you're an obsessive-anorak-trainspotter-Spectrum type. Many people look back on the eighties as the golden years for anything to do with videogames. Rose-tinted spectacles is an understatement here, though, because (let's face it) the Vic 20, Spectrum, C64 period is nothing more than a distant selective memory. People forget that the games were often no more than four colour demos with music that would sound better if it was written by a stoned Rolf Harris on a Stylophone. This isn't a kick in the teeth to pioneer artists such as Rob Hubbard and Tim Follin, though. These bedroom musicians/programmers are responsible for years of bleep (not Sheffield LFO) music that graced countless early home computer games. It's widely acknowledged, though, that with the technology available, producing music for the Spectrum was a very hard task.

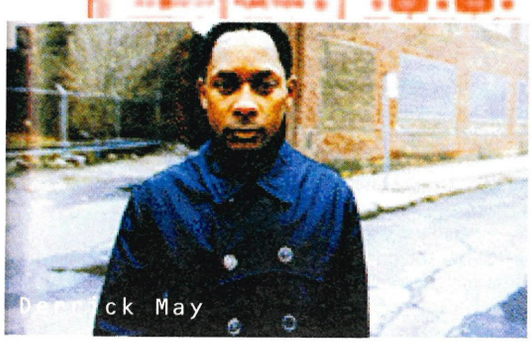
For a start, the Spectrum could only play four sounds at any one time. Compared to today's multi voice, midi technology, the Spectrum was practically stone age. Yet programmers like Mr Hubbard managed to program tunes that would circle your brain for hours after you'd stopped playing and gone to bed ready for school the next morning. The amazing thing is most games in 'ye olde days' were programmed by one person, hidden away in a bedroom somewhere. There were no dedicated musical teams to produce hard-hitting, atmospheric soundtracks. Which is why, despite the relative cackness of most of this era's game music, you have to appreciate what these guys were doing. Maybe, unlike today's new school, the old school were the 'True Renegades'.

Street Cred or Game Dead?





These days, any good development team has a team of musicians working on game soundtracks in a purpose-built studio. If this isn't the case you probably find a team of decadent music biz lawyers frantically trying to find commercial bands and tracks to give their game a bit of street kudos. Psygnosis are the forerunners in this part of the industry. WipEout, one of Psygnosis' first PlayStation titles, heralded in this new era of 'cool game music = good sales'. And looking at the sales of both the WipEout games and their respective compilation albums, it looks as though it was a smart move on Psygnosis' part. Although the soundtrack wasn't completely commercial (some tracks were produced by in-house musician Cold Storage), listening to the likes of The Chemical Brothers, Photek and The Prodigy on a videogame was a stunning experience. Since WipEout there's been a steady stream of licensed music accompanying our PlayStation gaming, with the likes of Blur gracing FIFA: Road To The World Cup and even Derrick May producing tracks for the forthcoming Ghost in The Shell.





into sound...

In-house Musos



Let's not forget the in-house musicians, though, who are the backbone of the videogame music industry. Times are changing within development and publishing houses and music is being looked at as almost as important as visuals and gameplay, meaning more cash is being ploughed into this side of the business. Take DMA's Grand Theft Auto, arguably last year's finest and definitely most successful soundtrack. It could also be argued GTA was the bearer of the world's first dynamic game soundtrack in that a different radio station would play in each different car. To produce this, though, DMA have built up one of the biggest and most advanced dedicated game music studios in Europe. In fact, DMA are so confident of the strength of good game audio that they have seven dedicated staff manning their studio! Hopefully this will catch on throughout the industry until every developer/publisher has the ability to produce dedicated game music. Still, we haven't got a problem with listening to some of the world's best bands and producers on our games in the meantime.

Bold Storage

If the PlayStation was a cartridge-based machine, you wouldn't be reading this feature now because the music would be nondescript and not worth writing about. It's only really possible to have commercial or decent in-house soundtracks because of the massive storage capacity of a CD, which is why you never hear commercial music on an N64 or other cartridge-based machines. Unlike the pioneers of home videogame music, the music on a CD doesn't have to be meticulously programmed as it can be recorded directly onto the CD. Of course there's some programming involved to get the music working in conjunction with the game, but the music can be recorded in a regular fashion (not that this is easy, by the way).

Playstation plays Wembley

Now that we have the technology to experience professionally- and artistically-crafted game soundtracks, we can expect to hear some stunning compositions in the future. With publishers such as DMA championing the 'do-it-yourself' ethos and Sony and Psygnosis going for the 'get somebody famous to do it for you' option, it looks like an exciting era is about to emerge. Whichever way you look at it, though, music in videogames is going to become big business very soon, and hopefully big business means big quality. We'll see you at the PlayStation's debut Wembley concert soon...

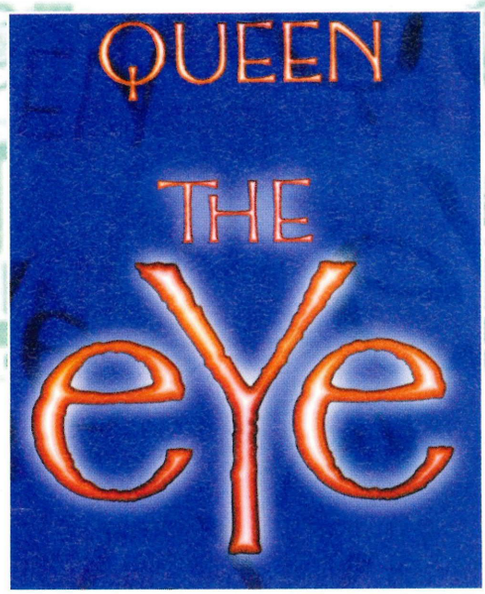
Top Five Playstation Soundtracks (In-House)

1. Grand Theft Auto
2. Resident Evil 2
3. Bust-a-Move Rythm and Dance
4. Courier Crisis
5. Tomb Raider 2

The Fatman Cometh

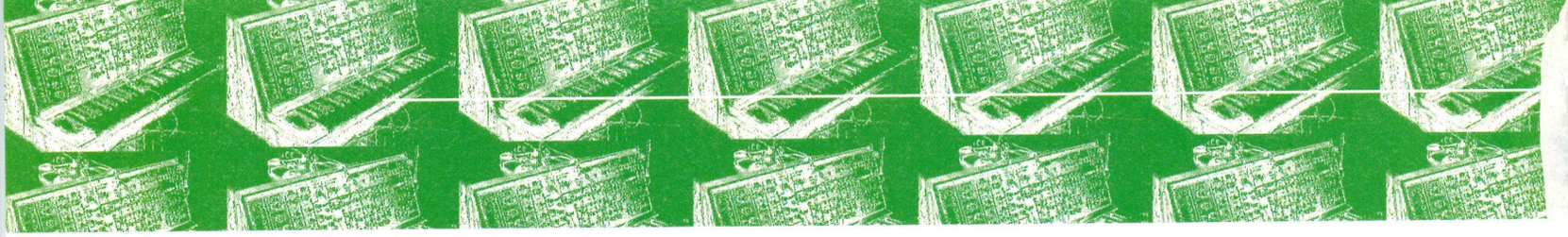
Taking the whole videogame music thing one stage further is George Sanger, better known as The Fatman. If you're looking for a videogame musical hero you can forget about Rob Hubbard, Cold Storage or any amount of dance acts on the scene. The Fatman has sold more music than the queen of sleaze, Madonna. And he isn't some spotty studio nerd either. The Fatman puts the music biz in videogame music and his pseudo-pop star lifestyle is a regular talking point within industry circles. It's said that he doesn't leave home without his entourage and the Fatman's Barbecue is the most important musical event in the videogame calendar.

Every year The Fatman holds this event to bring together all of the major players in the whole multimedia/videogame industry. It's a major happening where all aspects of audio couture are covered in an attempt to take computer-based music into the next level. Alongside delegates from MicroSoft, Intel and many other key players, DMA were also present this year. In fact, DMA were the only European developers invited to the Fatman's Barbecue. Hopefully this will spur other publishers on to get their musical act together.



Queen the Eye

As if Freddy Mercury wasn't immortal enough, there's now a game based around the Queen ethos and music. Queen the Eye takes place in a neo-futuristic world, controlled by an all-powerful computer called The Eye. The music and scenes are taken from Queen music and videos, but, alas, we don't get to see queen singing on a train a la Breatkhrough.



DMA/Music Studio

DMA Designs' audio department is one of the best and most comprehensive in the whole of Europe. They're responsible for the superb GTA soundtrack. What better reason, then, to speak to audio head honcho Colin Anderson to find out what it's all about...

EPM: **How many staff does the department employ?**

CA: Eight full time members:
Two red book composers, responsible for creating and recording all CD tracks
One MIDI composer, responsible for N64 MIDI and any MIDI conversions
One sound designer, responsible for sound effects design
Two audio programmers, responsible for implementing audio into games
One co-ordinator, for co-ordinating stuff

EPM: **How many people do you have working on any one game?**

CA: Each project requires input from at least one composer, one sound designer and one audio programmer. The team gets involved at the beginning of a project and then again when a playable demo has arrived.

EPM: **At what stage do you start to implement the music into a game?**

CA: Once we have a playable demo we add some sound effects, either some basic stuff or sounds from an existing project, just to get a feel for what works and what doesn't. Then the audio programmer works together with the sound designer to define Audio Logic, the bit of code that determines how sounds are triggered and manipulated. Proper sound effects are then designed and implemented until the 'right' sound is identified. This is an on-going process until the game is properly playable and at this stage the music is composed and implemented in a similar process to the sound effects process. The overall result is gauged and things like volume, stereo position and sound priorities are tweaked to get everything just right. After this, time permitting we add some extra touches to put the icing on the cake.

EPM: **Is this a long process?**

CA: Sound effects take about one to four hours each, depending on complexity and source material. Music tracks take an average of five days each to produce. GTA tracks were taking two to three weeks each, though.


Colin Anderson- DMA

EPM: **Many people have access to music production programs in the home. What programs do you use?**

CA: We use Pro Tools III hard disk recording systems for CD tracks and Cubase VST or Logic Audio for MIDI compositions. Sound effects are designed using Sound Forge 4.0 and Plug-Ins, Samplitude and a 200 disc CD library.

EPM: **Do you encounter problems when composing for different systems?**

CA: Multi-platform development is difficult since each platform has different audio capabilities. PC and PlayStation are reasonably similar but the N64 needs a complete rethink if a conversion is needed. This is very time consuming for the audio team and places a large drain on our resources.

EPM: **Anything else you'd like to add?**

CA: We are constantly pushing forward the possibilities of computer game audio, we have a clear vision of what audio should add to the player's experience and how to achieve this. GTA was only a step on the way

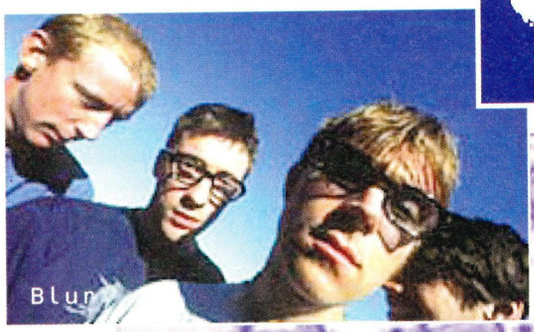
Quad Communications


Quad Communication

Eutechnyx, creators of the excellent driving game Total Drivin', didn't just stop at licensing a few commercial tunes for this game. They went and licensed the whole soundtrack from a dance label. Quad Communications are purveyors of fine trance and pumping house which Eutechnyx reckon is perfect for Total Drivin'. "The soundtrack is a very important aspect of any game, especially racing games, and it's often overlooked by developers", said PR manager Kev Shaw of Eutechnyx, "so when we were developing Total Drivin', we wanted a soundtrack that reflected the game; fast-paced, exciting and cutting-edge, but with broad appeal". Just like the label then.

Scott from Quad Communications said the label were happy to supply tunes by the likes of Pink Bomb, Digital Monkeys and Cruzeman because most of them are avid games players themselves. One listen to the Total Drivin's soundtrack gives you a slice of British Saturday nightlife and fantastic gaming music in one go, and If more labels like Quad Communications were to supply music for games, we'd be in for some class soundtracks.

Commercial Stuff





WipEout 2097 pushed the door open for what was, and is still to be, the biggest revolution in videogame music. WipEout was the first PlayStation game to feature tracks from already-established commercial artists. To tag onto the 'cool' PlayStation culture, most games opt for some kind of dance music which is why we often hear the Chemical Brothers and Prodigy mentioned in the same sentence as PlayStation. This commercial approach isn't a novelty either; there's no doubt that the WipEout soundtrack was superb. So much so that there's actually a compilation CD available so that you can listen to the music without playing the game. Latest additions to the PlayStation music scene are Blur, Crystal Method and a host of big name techno DJs that grace the Manga licence, Ghost In The Shell. Gran Turismo is also set to have a brand-new commercial soundtrack on its UK release, featuring the likes of Ash, Manic Street Preachers and Dubstar.

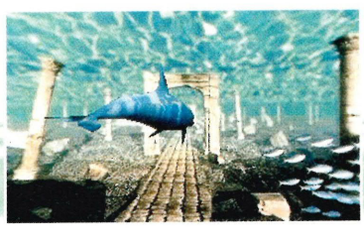
On the other side of the coin, commercial artists are using videogames in their music and at their concerts. U2 used enormous images of Lara Croft on their world-wide Popmart tour and Super Furry Animals placed themselves into Actua Soccer 2 for their latest video. You can even hear your favourite games sampled in some tunes. The Wu Tang Clan used Soul Blade, Yellow Magic Orchestra used the first ever Space Invaders sample and a host of dance acts use videogames for inspiration and pilfering.





Music Games

A new style of game gas reared its head over the last year or so. The music-based game should in theory make a very poor gameplaying experience, but if you've played Parappa The Rapper you know that the theory is wrong. Here's a quick run-down on the PlayStation's music games.



PHLUID

Control a dolphin as you swim around the ocean in an attempt to find and collect music samples. These sample can then be mixed up in a music sequencer to make your own tracks. It's taken off big time in Japan with club nights and competitions based on the game. We haven't had chance to play it yet but we're well looking forward to getting our preview copy.



BUST-A-MOVE RHYTHM AND DANCE



It's the same as Parappa The Rapper really, but this time, instead of hitting the buttons in time to a rap you have to hit them in time with the music to make your character dance. Again, it sounds crap but once you get into it you have hours of disco groovin' fun. The music is a strange brew of Japanese hip-hop, dance and pop but it's some of the catchiest game music we've heard (although we're loathe to admit it).



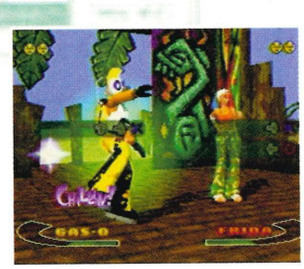
PARAPPA THE RAPPER

Hit the buttons in rhythm to make Parappa rap along with his friends. Sounds crap but once you start playing you're glued to the screen. The rap-based music is hilarious but it sticks in your mind forever and is perfectly suited to the game.





PARAPPA THE RAPPER™



Top Five Playstation Soundtracks (Commercial)

1. WipEout 2097
2. Ghost In The Shell
3. Rapid Racer
4. WipEout
5. Total Driving

Top Ten Tunes That Should be on a Playstation Game

	ARTIST	TITLE	GAME
1.	Photek	Ni-ten-ichi-ryu	Bushido Blade 2
2.	Fat Boys	Wipeout	WipEout
3.	Primal Scream	If It Moves Kill 'em	Grand Theft Auto
4.	Beatles	Yellow Submarine	Critical Depth
5.	Ravesignal	Horsepower	Any driving game
6.	Depth Charge	Shaolin Buddha Finger	Tekken 3
7.	Christopher Just	I'm a Disco Dancer	Bust-a-Move Rhythm and Dance
8.	Chemical Brothers	Block Rockin' Beats	Tetris
9.	Prince	Darling Nicky	Pandemonium 1 & 2
10.	Spice Girls	Wannabee	The N64 console





WIN COPIES OF GRAND THEFT AUTO AND WIPEOUT 2097 ALBUMS

quad communications

We've managed to get the best of PlayStation soundtracks to give away, in one form or another. Five winners each receive a copy of the Grand Theft Auto game and five runners up get a copy of the WipEout 2097 compilation on hard-to-find gatefold vinyl. Also, the first person drawn out of the hat gets four tunes from the superb Total Drivin' soundtrack on vinyl for their listening pleasure. What do you have to do to win one of these top music prizes then? Simple, answer the following question:

Which pop band provided the title tune for FIFA: Road To The World Cup '98?

A. OASIS
B. BUCKS FIZZ
C. BLUR
D. WHAM

Send entries to the following address: Beats 'n' Pieces Compo, Extreme PlayStation Magazine, Quay Magazine Publishing, Jade Manor Court, West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset BH15 1JF.

Make sure your entries arrive before 22nd May, or we'll dump them in the quay.

REVIEWS

x-rated



This month we've added a new dimension to your favourite PlayStation publication, namely the Import section. As more and more games players are getting into pricey imported games, we've decided to dip in to that corner of the PSX universe and give our two penneth'. Now these 'hotter than a stolen GTi' titles get the full EPM analysis and treatment, letting you make an informed and wise decision when shelling out serious cash on it, and without even a hint of bandwagon-jumping (for all you cynics out there).

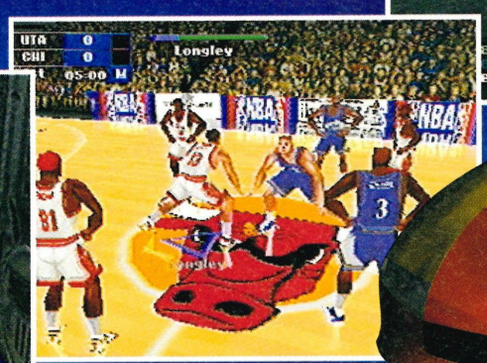
· PAL
Alundra
Cardinal Syn
Gex 3D: Enter The Gecko
Ghost in the Shell
Motorhead
NBA Fastbreak '98
Premier Manager '98
Rascal
Spawn
Wayne Gretzky Hockey
Xenocracy

· Import
Bushido Blade 2
Tekken 3
Tenchu

· Platinum
adidas Power Soccer
Formula 1
ISS Pro
Mortal Kombat Trilogy
Pandemonium











REVIEW GUIDE

Score: 96-100%
A virtually perfect game that will quite probably change your life, bring about world peace and plug the hole in the ozone layer. The artistic equivalent of Star Wars, say, in a pristine video game incarnation. Owning it is, of course, compulsory.

Score: 90-95%
Quite probably a classic title, this baby gets your dander well and truly up for weeks. A sure-fire 'it' game, it's strong all round and eminently playable. If it were a bar of chocolate it would be a Maverick. Or a Wispa Mint.

Score: 80-89%
Most likely a front-runner in its genre, anything that gets a mark in this bracket should be played first to make sure it's to your taste. Rest assured, though, it's a fine game and well worth looking at. Probably best compared to a pair of Vans trainers.

Score: 50-79%
Getting a bit wobbly here, and probably showing a few cracks in its makeup. Passionate fans of certain genres still may find something in this though. A bit like finding out the lovely girl you are snogging has a hairy upper lip.

Score: 25-49%
A plate of cack with a side order of poo, anything daring to get a score like this is obviously rubbish, and the software company must have known it. Stay away from this title. The gaming equivalent of changing Opal Fruits to Starburst.

Score 00-24%
Anything scoring this badly must not only be one of the poorest titles ever, but it must have a cynical and downright dishonest soul at its black heart. Only a blatant cash-in, rip-off or pack of lies will warrant such a pasting. The final nadir of human decency.

Motorhead

Not Heavy Metal, but Speed Garage!

From the usually-placid country of Sweden comes this bored-out six-cylinder fire-breathing monster of an arcade racer that burns off the opposition like a joyrider at some traffic lights. So slip on your string-backed driving gloves and mirror, signal, manoeuvre and accelerate to 200mph as fast as you jolly well can.

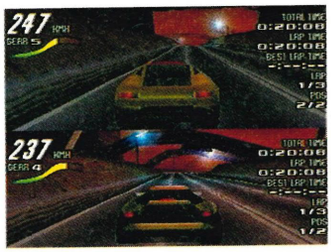
While the simulation end of the driving game market seems to be sewn up pending the arrival of Gran Turismo, the more arcade-slanted slice of the hi-octane pie is still wide open. The ropey Ridge/Rage Racer series is seriously showing its age, while Destruction Derby 2 is hardly a fresh face anymore either, leaving things ripe for a new contender to the crown of simple but effective speed-based thrills. Need for Speed 3 (83% last issue) is a candidate, combining a well-needed step up in the graphical department with the focus on adrenalised velocity rather than outright accuracy. However, it lacked a certain flair, that je ne sais quoi quality which elevates a game to 'really rather good' status. With this latest offering, though, Gremlin have scored a definite double whammy; Motorhead melds aggressive skid 'n' shunt action with a keen eye for groovy styling and visual dynamism.

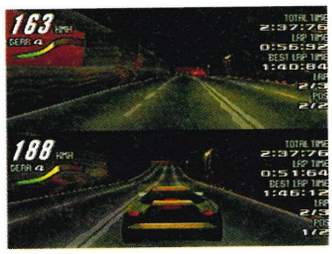


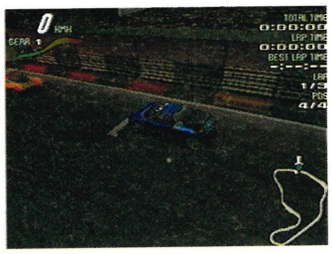
Chunky Tonkas

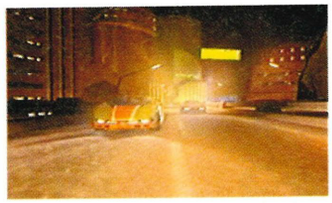
Set in what appears to be a 'fifteen minutes into the future' alternative reality, the cars are cool, chunky Tonka roadsters that look like the posy concept vehicles manufacturers always mock up for motor shows but never have the guts to build, while the tracks are extreme fantasy speedways that would fail any stringent safety requirements for sure. The emphasis is on breakneck, seat-of-the-pants action, so slow hairpins are at a minimum, the courses being on the whole hair-raising flat-out curves and tortuous twisting sequences, with the odd stomach-churning drop or terrifying jump.

Accordingly, the cars' handling errs on the side of tail-happy sliding and power-skids rather than pinpoint accuracy and clinical precision, meaning getting round corners is less a case of picking out the racing line than grabbing the car by the scruff of the neck and flinging it in sideways to scrabble through a bend. Pleasingly, however, the physics are accurate inasmuch as speed gets scrubbed off if you oversteer too much, meaning a neat and tidy driving style ultimately pays off. In the heat of the race it all goes out the window as you desperately fight to stay in control, though. The analog option is a dream too, allowing for the tricky two-stick accelerator setting as well as the more conventional X and Square combination, while the steering turn-in is reactive but forgiving, enabling one to perform the gratifying aggressive manoeuvres described above with natty poise. There are only two views available (almost bonnet view and just above and behind), but this is really all that is needed, as the in-car is high enough to get good visibility to the horizon and the outside view is clear of the car blocking your line of sight, so your own taste should dictate the best.





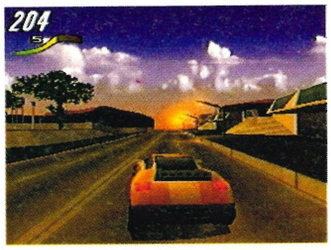


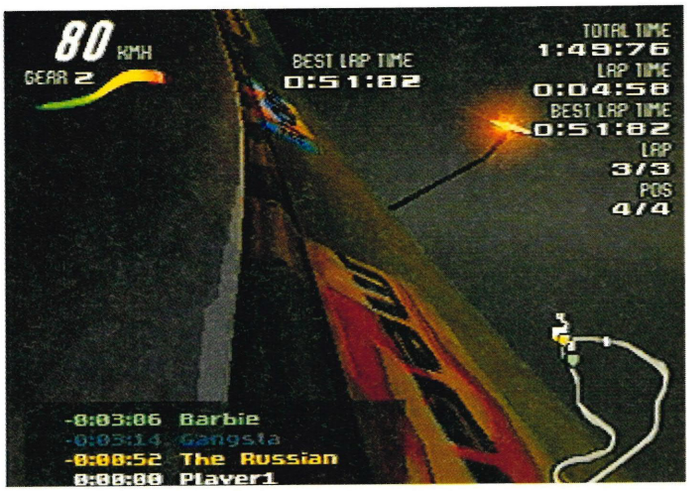


> **"...the tracks are extreme fantasy speedways that would fail any stringent safety requirements for sure..."**

As you would expect, various cars are available as explained elsewhere. There are only three default versions available at the outset and one of them is virtually useless, but their driving differences are quite marked and not purely cosmetic. Worse, though, is that there are only two tracks left unlocked when you begin, as progressive victories are needed in the League option to gain the other six, and even on Easy level the opposition is hyper-competitive, racing each other at close quarters and at a fair old clip. They're not the usual boring and infallible robots, though, spinning off sporadically enough to be interesting, and often providing a shock if you're right under someone's rear bumper at the time of a crash. The inevitable collisions with other cars on such narrow and nasty tracks are solid-feeling whilst not being disastrous (a la DD2), letting you get away with some impolite nudging but not full-on T-bones, while scraping the side barrier causes a shower of neat sparks and a loss of speed, but avoids a WipEout-style 'thump and stop', allowing the action to continue unabated in spite of unsuccessful or slack manoeuvres. Disastrous off-track wanderings can also result in the car rolling onto its roof or even flipping end over end in



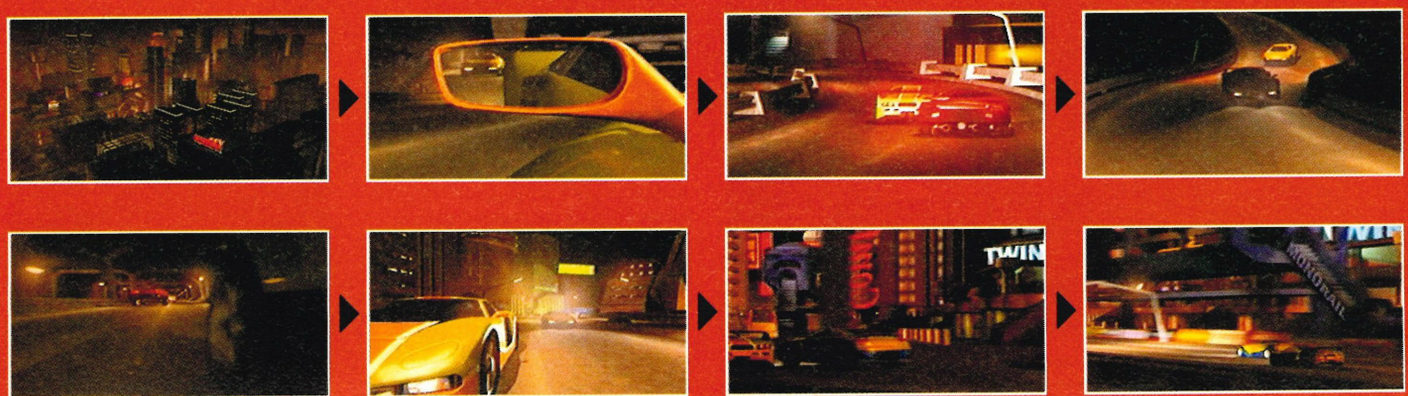




▲ Hmmm, pushed the envelope a little too far that time...

▼ SPEED AND MOTION

Motorhead has one of the coolest and best-drawn FMV Intros seen for a while around these jaded parts.

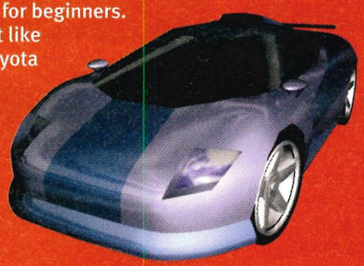


NIPPY JALOPIES

The cars you drive are a joy to behold; check out these six gas-guzzling velocity beasts:

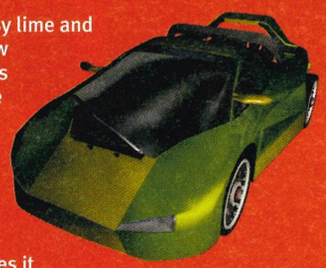
ADDER MK2

This blue-hued baby has good acceleration and grip but a mediocre top speed, so is ideal for beginners. Looks a bit like the naff Toyota MR2 though.



RESONIC

With a queasy lime and canary yellow paint job, this vehicle is the least groovy to behold, and its snail-like terminal velocity makes it doubly unattractive.



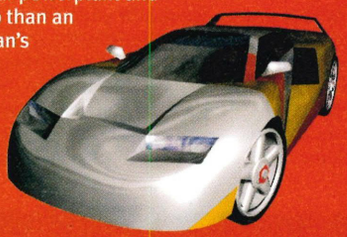
ASC

This is more like it! Sleek styling and plenty of grunt make this car the best of the default vehicles. Its twitchy handling requires some getting used to, so be warned.



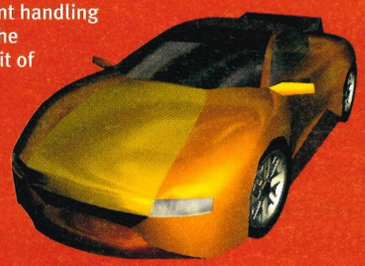
ASC II

Sporting the snazziest go-faster stripes, this evolution of the standard Asc is a stormer, bearing a muscular powerplant and more grip than an Action Man's hands.



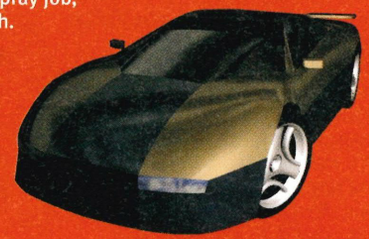
PYTHON V12

This honey's engine propels it forward like a rocket, but the drawback is indifferent handling around the bends. Bit of a babe magnet, mind.



RBUILD 2

Similiar specification to the Python, but with marginally more acceleration. Let down by its drab spray job, though.



mid-air, a welcome addition that gives things a realistic yet highly entertaining slant.

Ghostly Haloes

Where Motorhead really scores, though, is in the highly polished polygons that whizz by as smooth as a Terry Thomas chat-up line, holding together with barely a hint of clipping, moving at a greyhound-like 50 frames per second. Increasing the number of opponents from the standard three to a fraught seven apparently reins it back to 25 fps, but I'm damned if I can see any discernible slowdown or jerkiness. Pop-up is masked by the least obtrusive implementation of the oft-abused 'fogging' technique yet. Indeed on the first track the programmers have wryly shrouded the whole landscape in a haze of mist, meaning that brake and head lights glow mysteriously when at a distance, and street lamps have a ghostly halo cast around them. Other neat visual touches abound throughout the game; neon signs on gantries blaze brightly from afar and huge monolithic skyscrapers loom suddenly out of the gloom, while the sky backgrounds are subtly-shaded panoramic views that range from ominous blood-hued sunsets to fluffy nimbus clouds, all so perfectly drawn they drag your attention away from the action (with inevitable painful results). Additionally there are cheeky spoof advertising hoardings advertising products such as Kenny Clein underwear and Fiji film, but these are usually only readable in post-crash, pointing-at-the-wall situations.

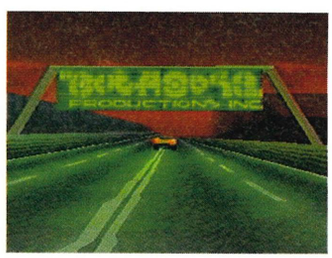
Unusually for an arcade racer, the sound is a vital part of the action as well, giving vital audio clues that actively augment your chances of staying in control. The engine noise is also worthy of praise, as even though it can't be described as a full-blooded roar of power it does sound wickedly vroomy, and snarls like an angry wildcat at a brush of the buttons. Screen detail can be adjusted to preference, with a map, speedo, time stats and current positions display being user-definable, a feature that soon becomes a necessity on the otherwise excellent two-player split-screen mode as the lap time readout comes up exactly in the middle of the screen at the point where the horizon sits, making spotting upcoming corners a touch harder to say the least. All the usual modes of play are present (Quick, Single, Time Attack, Ghost and League races), plus a more arcadified variant on the twin-player option where the time difference at checkpoints decides the winner. Annoyingly, though, it's only possible to save your position in a league when advancing a grade, so the same tracks have to be raced repeatedly even if first place is achieved on the easier examples, but I suppose this just adds to the challenge after the frustration wears off.

"...Where Motorhead really scores, though, is in the highly polished polygons that whizz by as smooth as a Terry Thomas chat-up line..."

All-round the presentation is over and above the call of duty, including the first rate intro movie shown here, while the options menus are all slickly put together and drawn with a great deal of technical



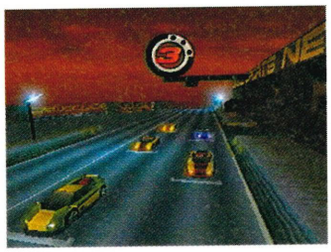
This intriguing statue looks like a relic from Communist Russia.



panache and eyeball appeal. Best of which is the loading screen which seems to pop up a bit too regularly, but boasts a neat drawing of a pretend engine block with the Motorhead logo etched proudly onto its manifold. Accompanying music is a kind of acid/rock/house/industrial effort (if you can imagine such a thing) and needs turning down promptly, alas, while the tune that goes with the aforementioned loading page is a much better jungly-type ditty that can't be quietened, which is unfortunate as its over-repetition soon becomes a bit tiresome as well.

Top Trump!

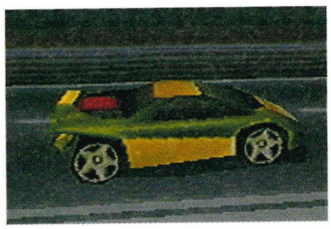
Taking its cue from the profusion of spectacular sensation-hunting sit-down coin-op racers that have become the mainstay of arcades lately has proved to be the trump card for Motorhead, as its laser-guided concentration on providing hyper-playable thrills means all unnecessary elements are pared



away to create the sleek and aerodynamic thumb candy classic you see before you. Ignoring the undoubted attractions (and merits) of true-to-life vehicles and driving models has left the programmers free to invent their own game universe where the laws of physics were decided by Skid Solo and not the old bearded guy in the clouds. This, of course, means the Holy Grail of all-out racing becomes the sacred and pure result, all the normal detracting factors such as poor frame counts and mawkish handling painstakingly polished out so the remaining game shines. However, the built-in drawback of this is that a long-term learning curve is sacrificed in the name of the instant rush of gratification it so ably provides, and this is the reason it doesn't score a top mark. Unlike the established dons of the racing genre (WipEout 2097, F1 '97 and Gran Turismo) you don't get the feeling you could play it for hours, then days, then months, gradually eking out speed and time as your skill develops, an ultimately open-ended experience. Don't get me wrong, this isn't a throwaway game by any stretch of the imagination, it's just that it's like the nitrous oxide injectors that loon Americans like to fit to their cars; a sudden rush of laughing gas and huge neck-snapping acceleration, and that's it for now. Nonetheless, Motorhead provides a genuine and fulfilling Computer Game Experience (TM) that makes the rest of the pack look like cheap and cheesy slow-pokes in comparison.

Golf Lima Foxtrot.

EPM
CHRISTIAN



Second Opinion

Motorhead is simple, fast and fun but doesn't have the depth of TOCA or the forthcoming GT. Still it's a great arcade racer for speed freaks to get their teeth into. Let's Rock!!!

Lemmy

TRACK MARKS

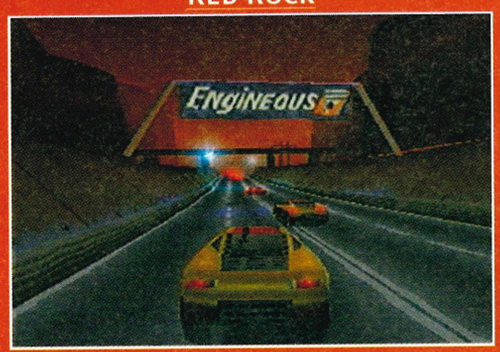
The first four courses are all uniquely challenging and have very individual 'looks':

Goldbridge



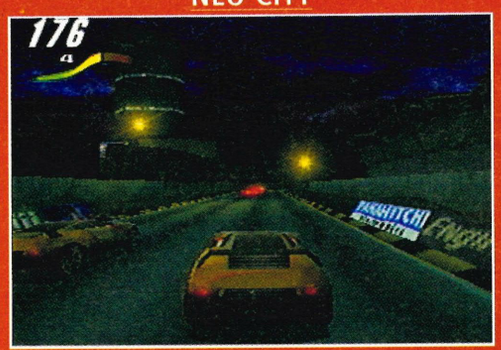
This permanently fog-bound track eases you into the game gradually with its gentle bends and few nasty surprises. The long bridge straights are prime overtaking spots.

Red Rock



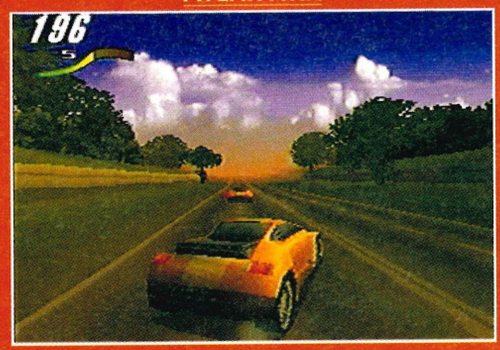
Under a blood-red sky this desert sprint is a lot more intimidating than Goldbridge, possessing long wobbly straights and tricky toll-booth splits in the road.

Neo-City



An urban speedway that snakes through shops and huge banked freeway-style curves. At points the four-lane hardtop abruptly narrows to one narrow channel, so watch it.

Atlantika



A deceptively elegant pastoral-looking wide road country drive over undulating hills turns into twisty suburban chicanery. Be careful not to drive off into the sunset.

The Score

Publisher	GREMLIN INT.
Developer	DIGITAL ILLUSIONS
Released	OUT NOW
Version	UK
Price	£39.99
Genre	RACING
Players	1-2
Memory Card	✓
Analog	✓

GAMEPLAY
9

ORIGINALITY
7

LIFESPAN
7

SOUND
7

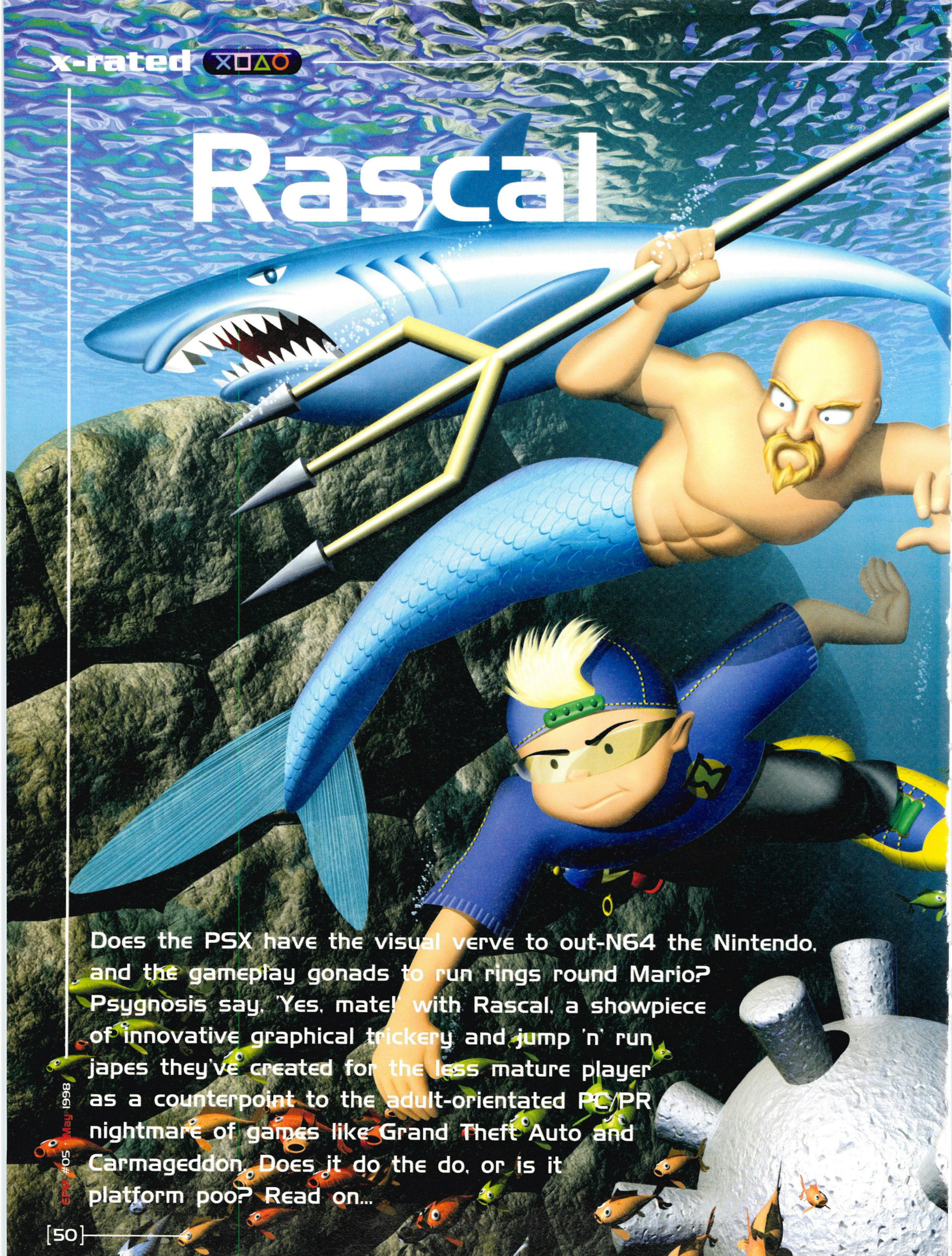
GRAPHICS
10

OVERALL
90%

in summary

Pick this game, not Lemmy's boils.

Rascal

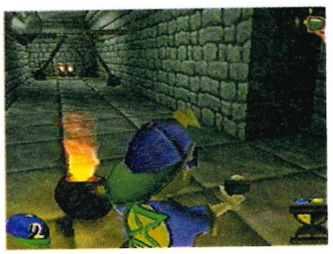


Does the PSX have the visual verve to out-N64 the Nintendo, and the gameplay gonads to run rings round Mario? Psygnosis say, 'Yes, mate!' with Rascal, a showpiece of innovative graphical trickery and jump 'n' run japes they've created for the less mature player as a counterpoint to the adult-orientated PC/PR nightmare of games like Grand Theft Auto and Carmageddon. Does it do the do, or is it platform poo? Read on...

While most genres of game available for the PlayStation are covered admirably (if not exhaustively), there's a distinct lack of titles in the Mario 64 mould, with Jersey Devil coming close in terms of style, graphics and playability, and the execrable Croc falling far short. Psygnosis have taken the bull by the horns, though, and produced Rascal, which is cited as being a serious rival to the ubiquitous fat plumber's somewhat cheesy crown, combining the graphical excellence and cunning platform puzzling which provided the N64 with arguably its only truly classic game so far. However, Rascal is apparently aimed squarely and exclusively at eight- to 12-year-olds. This should cut it some slack, so to speak, as the needs and abilities of a youngster are different from those of an adult when playing games, and differing criteria in terms of playing difficulty and style should be applied. A kid's attention span and patience with tricky or frustrating situations is obviously smaller than a teenager or adult's, and the game needs to reflect this very specifically if its target audience is going to be defined with similar precision.









Buzzing and Up For It

The story revolves around an inexorable 'Countdown to Oblivion' set into motion by the dastardly Chronon, an Evil Time Overlord who is dabbling with the past, present and future. He's abducted Professor Caspar Clockwise, scientific advisor to NATO, and stolen the boffin's plans for a time-travelling vessel, the ETTAS (Exploration Through Time and Space) machine, a pseudo-TARDIS that grants Chronon god-like powers as he re-arranges history to his own liking.

There is a fly in his villainous ointment though, in the shape of the Professor's teenage son, patronisingly known as Rascal, who's determined to rescue his disappeared Dad. Buzzing on his favourite Isotonic Nutri-Vibe hi-NRG drink, he's up for anything, ready to take on all of Chronon's various henchthings in whatever temporal context they like, so he can return pop to the Lab and 'get his homework in on time!' (the sappy creep). To assist in his mission he has the Prof's latest wacky invention, the bubble gun, which deals oblivion in the form of spurting soapy spheres, and his slam attack stomping ability that squashes hapless creatures under his deeply unfashionable trainers. He must find the various lost pieces of the Time Clock that are scattered throughout the space/time continuum in a number of varying zones, including a medieval castle, Aztec pyramid, the Wild West, Atlantis and the abstractly mysterious Corridors of Time. Each setting has three versions of itself existing differently in the past, present and future. For example, Atlantis is a verdant paradise island in the past, a sunken mer-person realm in the present and in the future is mysteriously found floating around deep space. Only after Rascal has found all the relevant bits and pieces throughout the various zones can he defeat Chronon and be re-united with his old man.

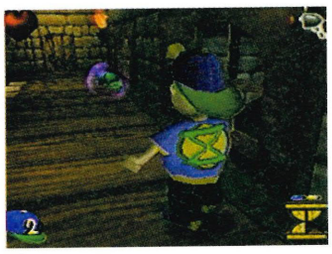


"...Buzzing on his favourite Isotonic Nutri-Vibe hi-NRG drink, he's up for anything..."

Hopefully by then he'll have learned to stop meddling with the cosmic balance of time and space like someone tinkering about in their garden shed.

Lush and Multitudinous

The first and most obvious feature of Rascal that strikes you is the quality of its graphics. Running at 50 frames per second, they're extremely smooth and crisp, the colours lush and multitudinous, rivalling the N64 for their vivid definition and silky movement. The main character and enemies are all chock-full of polygons, granting

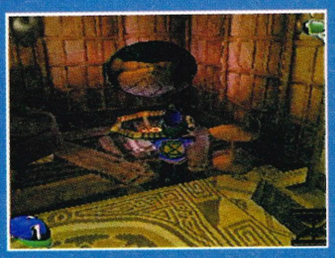






LUSTRAL VISIONS

These shots really need to be seen on the move to fully appreciate the coolness of the effects featured, but here you go anyway.



The Professor's ETTAS contraption creates these oil drop-like blobs of shiny-surfaced anti-matter type stuff which niftily reflect the room around it in real time while wobblingly pulsating.



Just a static statue, but coated in a highly polished metal that's like a multi-faceted mirror, reflecting both the torch lights flickering and your luminescent shooting bubbles beautifully.



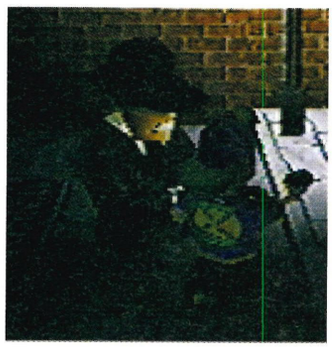
This indoor reservoir boasts the most intricate and realistic water effects seen yet on the PlayStation, beating even Tomb Raider 2 for realism. The shimmering, undulating surface is also strangely hypnotic and soothing (just don't jump in yet; you'll drown).



On the ancient island of Atlantis, Rascal pauses for contemplation and watches the sunset, resplendent in all its pan-spectral iridescence. Let's hope his enraptured state doesn't lead to him falling off...



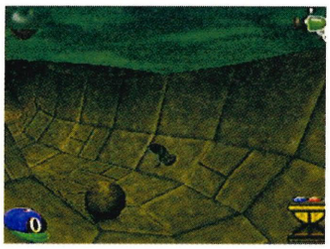
Yowch! Rascal gets a severe case of the crabs.

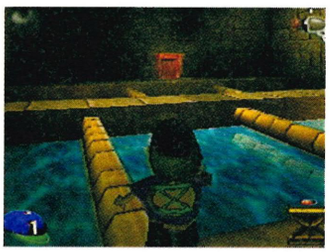


them buckets of cartoonish character; at least until you waste them with your surprisingly-effective homing bubble attacks. The game is also dotted with cool real-time lighting effects that show the PSX really is a heavyweight when it comes to flash look-at-me visual tricks, and compound the sweet eye candy already present.

Numerous groovy touches in the scenery are apparently revolutionary, based around the technique of 'environment mapping' which allows for some truly impressive reflection effects (see boxout). Rascal, his dad and the wicked Chronon have both been designed by Muppets creators Jim Henson's Creature Workshop, who seem to think what appeals to kids is a backwards-capped character with 'cool' 3D shades and a baggy egg-timer logo T-shirt, looking suspiciously like some ad-man's idea of what should go on a cereal packet as a mascot. His sprite is huge, obviously going for the bulbous Mario style, and is put together well, but he suffers some terrible polygon clippage when you get too close to his head. This is (I'm told) done on purpose to help you see around, but nonetheless I still suspect it's actually an unwanted bug.

> "...the main source of challenge and true meat of the game comes in the shape of simple timing tasks..."







Sizeable Momentum

Controlling our rotund hero isn't easy either. He has sizeable momentum, and although he can skid-stop at a tap of the L1 button, it's still all-too-easy to go careering off the edge of a narrow platform like some out-

PROTAGONIST PARADE

Rascal encounters a veritable



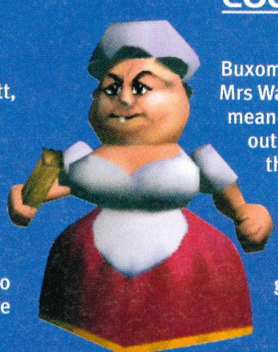
KNIGHT

The previously benign Sir Hackalott was a noble knight who ruled with a just and liberal heart, that is until Chronon popped into his vicinity through a wormhole and twisted his mind with malevolent magic. Now he stalks the corridors of his castle ready to behead and dismember precocious young time travellers with glee.



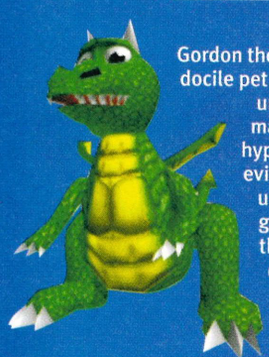
BLACKSMITH

Stokes the Blacksmith was a loyal servant of Sir Hackalott, making horseshoes for his master, and then making some more. Beware, though, as he's now a slave to beastliness, and because his rippling bare-chested physique and bushy moustache make him easy to mistake for one of the Village People's groupies.



COOK

Buxom roly-poly simpleton Mrs Washboard swings a mean rolling pin, so look out as she's deeply in the thrall of Chronon, who has hypnotised the old bag into believing Linda McCartney is gunning for her job.



DRAGON

Gordon the Good was the docile pet of Hackalott until his master was hypnotised into turning evil. Now he sits in an underground cavern, guarding a fragment of the Time Clock, dreaming of the heady days of his previous job as the foul-breathed Listerine mascot.



PAYNAL

Paynal, the Aztec messenger god, guards the sacred temple at Chichimeca with his scary mask and nasty pointy spear. He'll leave you alone until you attack, so sneak up behind him and blast him in the back like a cowardly running dog for best results.



MERMAN

This aquatically-inclined chap is Delphinus, King of the Dolphins, Tsar of the Trouts, Mackerel Monarch and the Kipper Kaiser. Chronon disguised himself as the mighty Poseidon, God of the Sea, and wowed the fishy bloke into doing his bidding. His trident has three very sharp prongs, so watch your rear when under the waves.

of control juggernaut, which, let me tell you, is pretty blimmin' frustrating. Diligence yields a gradual familiarity with Rascal's handling, but he still comes across as one of the least manoeuvrable characters on the PlayStation, lacking Crash's nifty legwork or the Jersey Devil's vaulting pirouettes. The tricky leaps and running-backwards-while-shooting the game demands are thus an uphill struggle.

The puzzles themselves are understandably not of a Krypton Factor level of difficulty as the game is aimed at the pre-pubescent, but some are so straightforward they don't really qualify as puzzles. More often than not, the key to a locked door is simply in the next room, requiring no thought whatsoever, and hence providing little satisfaction. In fact, the main source of challenge and true meat of the game comes in the shape of simple timing tasks, such as jumping from swinging platform to platform or avoiding the metronomically-timed darts that fly out of the wall. While these problems are necessarily fairly simple to grasp, they're often extremely difficult to execute, being of a 'tricky-frustrating' nature rather than 'tricky-challenging'. For example, in the surprise chute section, our diminutive hero rolls down a winding canyon at high speed, dodging the boulders strewn along its length. The trouble is the twists of the curves almost always block the view ahead, making it near-impossible to avoid going 'splat' on an unseen rock, meaning that the sequence has to be memorised. Bah! Boring...

It seems Rascal is too often dumped onto energy-sapping lava or nailed by an arrow it seems nigh-on impossible to avoid, which was annoying enough for me, a calm and Zen-grown man, yet alone a



▲ The vile time overlord Chronon.









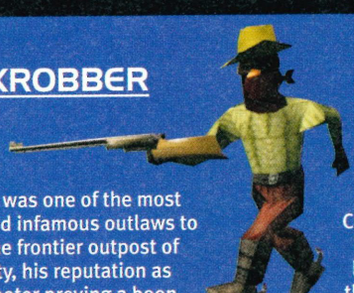
cornucopia of various things and individuals that are determined to kick his bucket:

ATLANTISMAN



While having without a doubt the stupidest headgear on the fabled island of Atlantis, Armando Gilletti was nevertheless a well-off courtier and military expert to King Atlas. However, he too has been seduced by Chronon, and now his martial expertise and amusing helmet has been bent to serve evil.

BANKROBBER



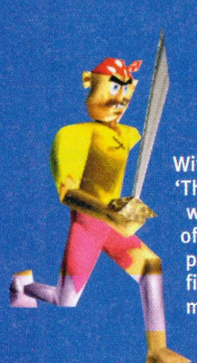
Wild Ned Meredith was one of the most feared and infamous outlaws to plague the frontier outpost of Dodgy City, his reputation as a fast shooter proving a boon against gunslingers but a handicap with the ladies. Unfortunately Chronon has possessed his mind, and now he's just intent on blowing you away.

MERWOMAN



These flipper-footed undersea lovelies are Delphinus' personal handmaidens who do his bidding unquestionably. The Time Clock fragments that are hidden in Davy Jones' locker are guarded by these gilled girlies, making Rascal's life tricky down below. That's a bad case of melon mould she's got there, mind.

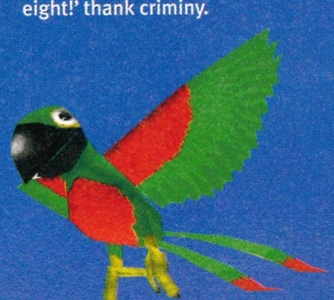
PIRATE



With his originally-named galleon 'The Jolly Raider', Peg Leg Pete was unquestionably the scourge of the Seven Seas. Hilariously possessing two intact legs, his fine swashing action was only matched by a strong buckling accompaniment. However the arrival of the sinister Chronon on board caused his cowardly crew to sensibly jump ship, leaving him alone and naked against the wicked Time Overlord's power.

PARROT

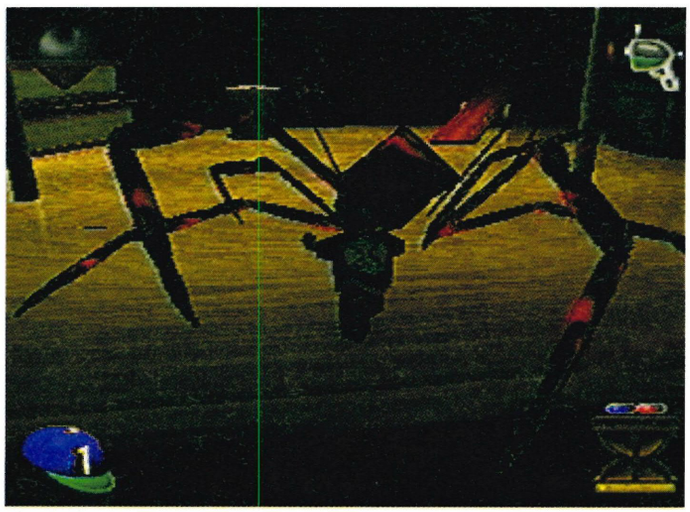
The avian companion to Pete, Jasper Parrot is also a slave to Chronon's will, and now flaps about the ship clawing at stripling epoch-surfers and definitely NOT cawing 'pieces of eight!' thank criminy.



CAMAXTLI

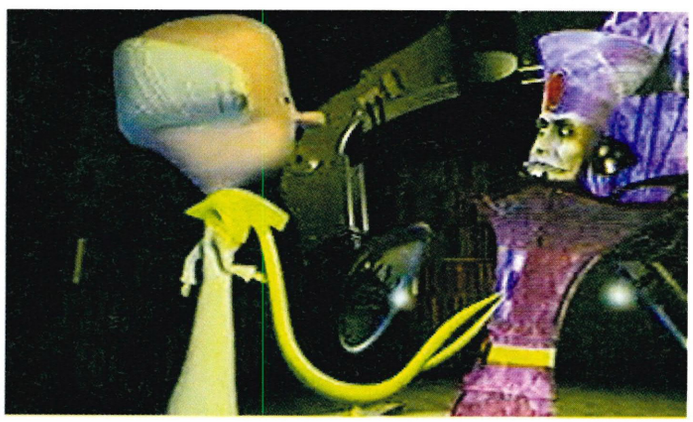


Camaxtli is the winged Lord of the Chase, a vengeful warrior-god who takes great pleasure in raining down ruddy great balls of flame on pesky trespassers. Just be careful not to get a peek up his loin-cloth, for pity's sake.



Incy Wincy spider, climbing up the... AAARRGGHH!

borderline-hyperactive primary schooler. Each life can take about three hits from whatever source, which sounds like a lot but there are so many ways to lose energy your initial three lives soon dwindle. For example, if you linger in a room for too long a bubble appears out of nowhere and out pops a nasty creature such as a spider, rat or bat that nibbles at your ankles or head and strips away some of your 'heart' vitality meter. In itself this is fair enough, but when you consider the obstacles you encounter are bound to wear some of your life away, it makes proceedings an awful lot harder, especially because in some cases it's impossible to avoid hitting them as they materialise right under your feet, when you can do nothing about it,



"...if you linger in a room for too long a bubble appears out of nowhere and out pops a nasty creature such as a spider, rat or bat that nibbles at your ankles or head..."

or worse the semi-random changing of the camera view makes it impossible to track and avoid them. This problem is another of Rascal's niggling flaws, as the viewpoint is often restricted by the dimensions of a room, which means if you back up against a wall (a tactic that's often necessary when retreating and firing at an attacker), the camera swings up vertically to point down at your head, meaning all you can see is a big blue reversed cap and some feet - not much use as you get chewed to bits by whatever beautifully-rendered baddie is after your hide off-screen.

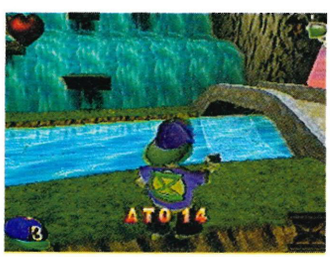
There are Lower Viewpoint and Change Camera switches on L2 and R2, but the former only moves things by about ten degrees, while the second is only effective in larger rooms that have enough space for the camera to shift about; in tight spots (where it's usually needed the most), it has a terrible tendency in refusing to depress and sit behind the character, which for the run-and-jump sections is a handicap to say the least.

Problems with the perspective also crop up sporadically. The bonus bubbles spread throughout the game are at times hard to distance, requiring you to go by the position of their shadow on the floor or jump about mindlessly trying to head thin air, and sometimes when Rascal is slightly in the distance he can briefly appear Escher-like in front of a close-to object, which is again ever so slightly disconcerting. His feet can become invisible by a turn of the same coin, but to be fair this glitch only occurs from time to time.

Kid-Centric

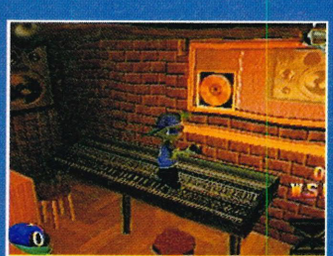
Technologically speaking, that Rascal is a showpiece is undeniable. The loading time between screens is almost instantaneous, giving it a definite cartridge game feel, while (as you can probably tell from the boxouts) its visual tricks and graphical sheen are pretty much unique and push the PSX nearer to its limits than most of the lazy titles around nowadays. However, this innovation doesn't really translate into the game design aspect, particularly in its structure and difficulty settings. For example, you can only save a game back at your house (basically upon completing a level), you have to play a world all the way from the





LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION.

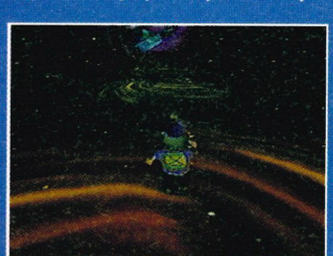
Some of the areas you encounter are witty, original and graphically extremely cute:



Rascal stumbles onto a well-equipped recording studio in the present-day Western zone, and proceeds to stamp all over the sliders with glee. But can he get a good balance in his cans?



The same zone turns out to be a film studio backlot, replete with a cardboard cut-out city-set in which a dinky dinosaur blunders around destructively in true cack B-movie style. "It's eating everything in its path" (including Rascal, natch).



Swirling vortices of temporal instability become platforms for Rascal to navigate in this limbo-level that leads to various arenas in which the becapped kid has to re-face enemies from before, only in deadlier guises.



This picturesque corner of the ancient Atlantis level lets Rascal cool off his feet and sup deeply from the ornamental fountain provided, with its special shaped spigot. Hmmm...

HAZARDOUS PERILS



Fairly early on Rascal encounters these enormous rolling columns of stone grinding up and down a U-shaped groove. He must be swift or be squashed flatter than a pint of draught Coca-Cola served in a pub. And no, it's not in love with him.



These pads rotate like tank tracks left and right, making footing treacherous and dragging the time-twisting tyke towards those sharp wooden stakes. Getting the bonuses requires a steady nerve and some well-timed leaping.



Rascal could be 'fin'-ished if he's not canny here, as sharks are on the prowl and abandoned World War II sea mines have inconveniently drifted into the derelict hulk of the galleon. Air is running low as well, so find a bubble and stick your face in it or drown horribly.



Here two chutes lead up to the next room, but the problem is that huge boulders roll down them alternately, requiring you to jump from left to right as you work your way up, all the while avoiding slipping into the water. Not at all easy, mark my words, unless you've got balls of stone that are larger.

beginning each time you die, which is tedium-tastic.

In addition, extra lives seem to be somewhat thin on the ground for a kid-centric game, and some rooms inexplicably have an unseen abyss waiting at their edges that you can plummet down without warning, causing much wailing and gnashing of teeth. Despite reports to the contrary in some rival mags, it's not easy to complete - in fact, this is the only game I've played since arriving here at EPM that's actually made me fume with frustrated anguish. Again it raises the question as to how a little darling would take to such needless cruelty.

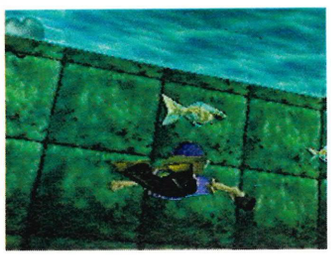
In spite of these criticisms, there's been a lot of effort imbued into Rascal, but it does seem a bit of a waste that all this cutting-edge polygon wizardry will be, in all likelihood, unappreciated by your snot-nosed little brother. The audio aspect of the game seems to have been neglected as well, being mostly unsurprising spot FX that are just there, and don't grab the ears with any determination.

Pretty Vacant

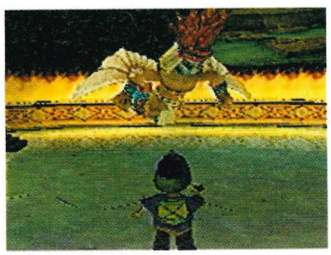
It seems that in trying to create a game that's over-specific in its intended audience, Traveller's Tales have blanded out the gameplay a little too much than they actually needed to, making it simplistic rather than simple, and contradicting this with harsh 'rules' that don't do the player any favours at all. I predict that any juvenile joypad jockey would be either little excited by the character and unsensational nature of play, or more likely be put off by the dogged perseverance it demands. Nonetheless, it's worth checking out for the beautifully-polished and varied look of the game and wry spots of humour and artistic inspiration, just as long as you can tough out the game's sterner idiosyncrasies.

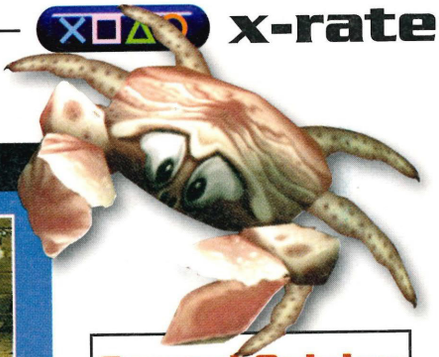
EPM
CHRISTIAN











Second Opinion

First impressions say that Rascal could be a great, if not the best 3D platformer for the PlayStation. However, after playing it for a while a number of fundamental gameplay and control flaws appear. Oh, and Rascal's a bit of a crud character.

Saul

The Score

Publisher	PSYGNOSIS
Developer	TRAVELLER'S TALES
Released	OUT NOW
Version	UK
Price	£39.99
Genre	3D PLATFORMER
Players	1
Memory Card	✔
Analog	✔

GAMEPLAY
6
ORIGINALITY
7
LIFESPAN
7
SOUND
5
GRAPHICS
10
OVERALL
80%

in summary

Your retinas will love you, but your resolve won't.

Ghost in the Shell

The world's first techno shoot-'em-up!



The second the amazing Ghost in the Shell intro kicks off, you know you're in for a roller-coaster ride through a futuristic techno heaven. The most striking thing about the intro isn't the crisp, action-packed Anime flying around the screen, it's the crisp, action-packed techno pumping out of the speakers. This sets the tone for the rest of the game, with a soundtrack coming straight out of the electronic underground.

Ghost in the Shell is loosely based on the Japanese Anime film of the same name. However, if you're looking for a game that follows the film's plot, you'll be disappointed. The game simply takes the ideas and characters from the film and drops them slap-bang into a neo-futurist, fully-rotating 3D blast fest. And yes, I did say 'fully rotating'. This means you can guide your extremely nimble craft (which, incidentally, looks like a mechanical ladybird) almost anywhere in the game. You can stick to walls, climb over buildings and even hang upside- down on ceilings. In fact you can go just about anywhere you like, giving the game a totally unique and original feel. This new style of play takes some getting used to, but once you have the hang of the controls you find traversing that skyscraper or negotiating the tunnels of a sewer upside-down becomes second nature.



Which is, perhaps, one of the game's biggest downers. Ghost in the Shell is far too easy. I'd give an average games player a couple of days to finish it. Some of the levels are very small and even the larger ones don't cause you too much grief. You can attempt a level as many times as you like and find that after a few goes you have it sussed. This is made worse by the fact that the gameplay is so enjoyable that you keep playing just to see the next level. It's a bit of a paradox really; you want to keep playing because the game is so good, but then you find that you've finished it in no time at all. There is a certain amount of replay factor, but after you've finished it the once you won't find much else besides.

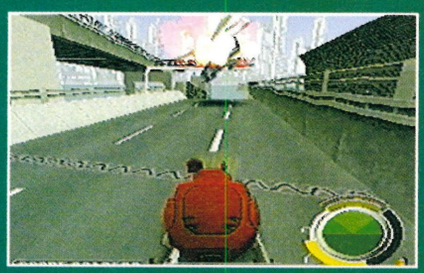
Rotate?

However small and easy to complete Ghost in the Shell is, there's no denying what's here is very original and of a very high standard. At first the visuals don't jump up and smack you in the face, but once you witness the speed and the way the screen rotates when you take to a wall or ceiling, you find yourself gob-smacked. The game loses no speed at all when the screen rotates, keeping everything smooth and clear. The actual buildings and environments are well drawn, but no more than functional. But with the amount of action going on you rarely have time to worry about the visuals. There's plenty of variety in the levels so you never feel like you're going over old

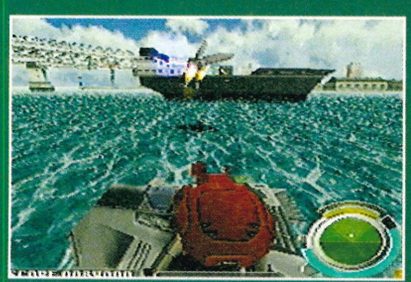
"...Each enemy craft and vehicle has been drawn to a very high standard and the movement and animation is second to none..."

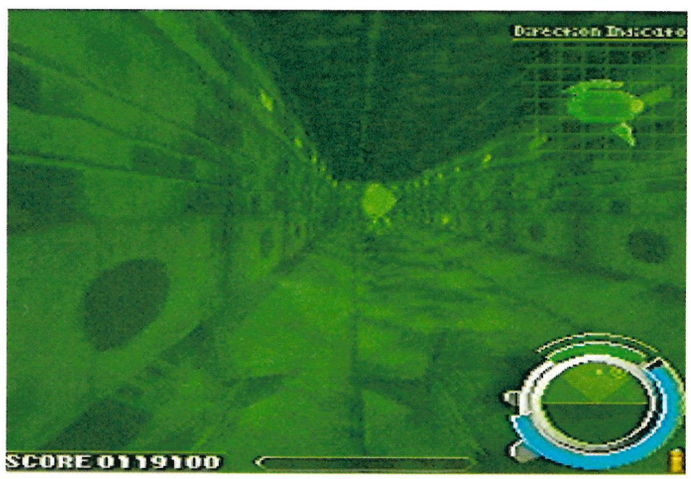


CHASE ME



As a small diversion to the rest of the game you get to go on a few chase missions. The first one has you dropping out of the sky and onto a moving boat. Once safely down, your job is to hold off the jet skiing troops and take out any airborne foe that may give you any trouble. Use the strafe buttons for left and right, whilst the joypad makes you rotate to target the enemy. The chase sections are great fun but, alas, like the rest of Ghost in the Shell they don't last long enough or offer enough of a challenge.



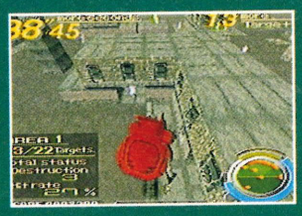


The excellent night vision mode as witnessed on level two.



TRAINING MODE





If you find yourself foxed by the full rotating 3D style of control, you can always enter the training mode. Here you have a set number of harmless targets to destroy within a time limit. It's great for getting to grips with the control method without the threat of getting blown to bits.

ground. You get to cause mass destruction throughout a city, in a sewer system, out at sea, on a highway and inside buildings of varying styles. If most of the levels weren't so short Ghost in the Shell would surely score very well in this department, but as it stands, there just isn't enough of each level.

Only While it Lasts...

Playing Ghost in the Shell is a truly liberating experience, but only while it lasts. Taking to the side of a building and fighting it out with an equally nimble enemy is a unique gaming experience. The rotating nature of the game means you can get yourself into some ridiculous positions on a level, but with a vehicle that's this controllable there are plenty of ingenious ways of getting back on track. In fact, getting right into the thick of things by going anywhere can be excellent fun. For instance, on level three you need to get up to a pipeline above you. The only way to do this is to walk up a girder and complete a succession of horizontal to vertical jumps. This type of gameplay hasn't been seen on the PlayStation before and it adds a whole new dimension to the 3D shoot-'em-up camp, but only while it lasts (have I said that before?).

Another of Ghost in the Shell's redeeming features is its impressive attention to detail. Each enemy craft and vehicle has been drawn to a very high standard and the movement and animation is second to none. However, although there's not much pop-up in the scenery, some of the enemy do seem to just appear in front of you at times. This can get a little frustrating, but believe me, it's improved massively since we played the preview version.

"...Sony's vision in hiring people like Derrick May and Joey Beltram to record for a video game is second to none..."

Techno Techno Techno!

The unique gameplay and superb attention to detail is backed up by one of, if not the strongest game soundtracks we've ever heard. The underground techno and electro score has been penned by some of the world's top techno producers and it fits the futuristic style of the game perfectly. The sound effects are also of a very high standard but with music as good as this you want to turn them right down - only you can't. Gutted. Sony's vision in hiring people like Derrick May and Joey Beltram to record for a video game is second to none; let's hope that they keep it up for their forthcoming games.

We haven't seen a game as polished on the presentation front as Ghost in the Shell. Your progress throughout the game is helped by some excellent Manga style clips, although the dodgy voice acting leaves a lot to be desired. Also, before each mission, you're treated to a gorgeous looking, moving 3D computer map screen, which identifies your goals for the mission.

Alas, Ghost in the Shell could have easily been so much more than it is. Everything here is as close to perfect as you can possibly get, but at full price, there just isn't enough here for all but the most dedicated Manga or shoot-'em-up fan. The unique style of 'go anywhere' gameplay is like a breath of fresh air to the stagnant shoot-'em-up genre and Sony have to be congratulated on trying something totally different. To an extent, Sony have achieved the impossible in changing the shoot-'em-up; if only they could have doubled the size of the game. As it stands, Ghost in the Shell is small, but perfectly formed.

EPM

SAUL



The Score

Publisher	SCEE
Developer	EXACT
Released	MAY
Version	UK
Price	£39.99
Genre	3D SHOOTER
Players	1
Memory Card	✔
Analog	✔

GAMEPLAY
9

ORIGINALITY
9

LIFESPAN
4

SOUND
9

GRAPHICS
8

OVERALL

81%

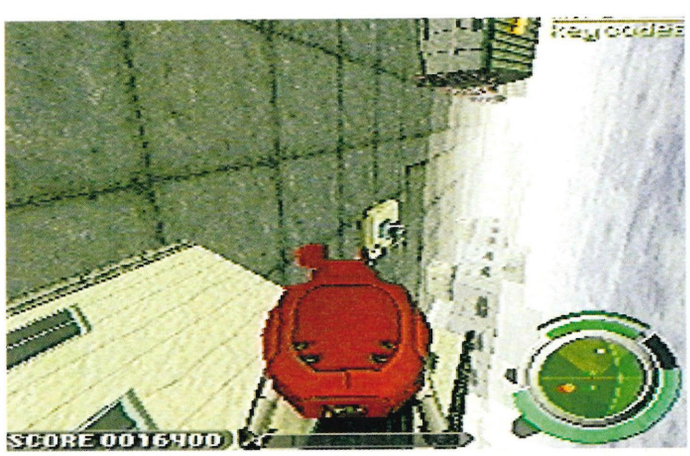
in summary

They say good things come in small packages...

Second Opinion

The gameplay and storyline are 'top notch', the only thing that lets it down is the crappy little vehicle you traverse in. It looks like a cyborg ladybird with Mickey Mouse ears. Manga magic!

Darren



Hold tight; things may get a little disorientating.

Xenocracy

When Four Worlds Collide



It's the year 10,600 in the really-quite-distant-actually future, and humankind has spread out among the planets of the solar system. This rapid expansion was only made possible by the discovery of a miraculous liquid energy source called lycosite. Far-flung moons have been colonised and subsequently terraformed to enable the mining and refinement of this precious runny ore to take place, and allow humanity to grab more lebensraum. Unsurprisingly, the spirit of co-operation that allowed this Solar Dominion to exist did not last. The four main splinters of planetary superpower, the Mars Combine, Earth Dominion, Mercury League and Venus Alliance have been waging a secretive war for dominance over the distant but vital colonies. Keeping the peace is the United Planet Nations, an organisation the four factions have signed a mutual protection pact with, and whose task it is to keep the fighting between them to an 'acceptable' level and thus stop all-out war from brewing to a boil.

Unlike its present-day toothless blue-hatted equivalent, this future United Nations has a sharp end, namely you, the sappily-named WingToucher, leader of the fearsome Rei Squadron and affiliated to the Special Operations Executive of the UPN. Your task is to fly missions defending the mining outposts against aggression, keeping the peace through violent intervention and to perform dodgy 'special missions' on behalf of the planetary representatives, keeping the status quo firmly static. A prime reason for this, of course, is to keep your employer in business, as only the demi-peace afforded by the UPN ensures its own survival. Thus a delicate balancing act must be struck between the four forces, not allowing any of them to get too strong or weak, lest the whole rickety business should break into warring bits and enormous thermostellar conflict erupt melodramatically as a result.

However, things look set to be stirred up after the arrival of a mysterious hyper-fast alien scout craft that turned up and buzzed one of Saturn's moons, taking a special interest in the Martian-controlled lycosite mine situated thereupon. A larger extraterrestrial expeditionary force may be on its way, so watch your Outer Rim for unwelcome probings.

Gunboat Diplomacy

Xenocracy attempts to fuse deep-space dogfighting with politically-flavoured gunboat diplomacy. In full simulation mode you are free to select your own missions using multiple sources of information, such as constant voice-overed news updates, detailed histories of the planets' machinations and on-the-

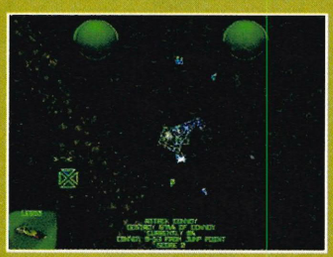
"...Xenocracy attempts to fuse deep-space dogfighting with politically-flavoured gunboat diplomacy..."



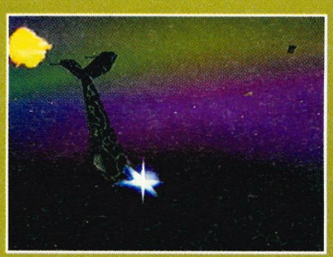


"THE BATTLEFIELD IS A HIGHLY LIQUID ENVIRONMENT..."

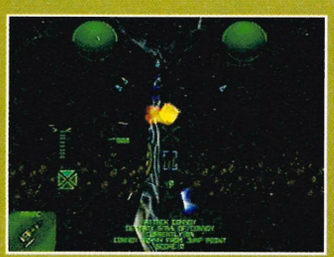
Combat in Xenocracy can turn on the drop of a hat, as these shots show:



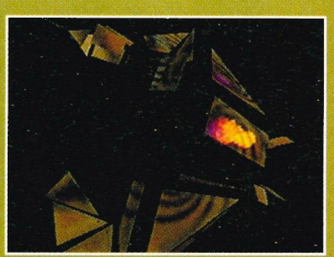
Aha! There's an Earth Dominion Starlight dead centre in the HUD. Time to kill...



Closing in now on the soon-to-be-wasted ship. Hmm. Nice background.



Uh-Oh! He's turned nose-to-nose and accelerated. What's he up to?



Kaboom! Oh he was about to open fire. Damn. Damn. Damn.



spot situation reports that assess the danger of a flashpoint of skirmishing kicking off. Actions undertaken by the superpowers or rogue pirate elements must be prioritised, taking into account the economic rating and political stability of the relevant factions plus their resulting military threat level.

At the beginning of play you have the choice of five ships with varying special roles and abilities. For example, you can pick a scout ship (that looks an awful lot like the Grolier logo, I reckon), a lumbering bomber or two good all-round fighters. Weapon payloads can be customised to taste and depending on mission profile, using a system of 'hardpoints' that let you bolt on various death-dealing beauties to your craft. As the action inevitably hots up, it's possible to set your organisation's Research and Development arm onto inventing new weapons and bits of kit that aid you in keeping the peace, such as a cloaking device, tractor beam, stealth technology, increased speed or shields, etc. You can also assign a wingman (or woman) who flys a mission profile of your choosing, such as covering your tail, attacking the primary target and so on. However if they're destroyed it's a serious drain on the UPN's resources, so this option should only be used when absolutely necessary. At certain points specialist missions need to be flown that could involve reconnaissance (usually requiring you to sensor scan a particular ship or object), or an R&D-based task that might need an enemy ship to be captured and brought back to base through a warp jump-gate, while the missions in general are generated randomly, so no two should ever be the same. To help the atmosphere all the mission briefings are given by video-captured actors who either implore you for help or goad you into attacking a rival faction.

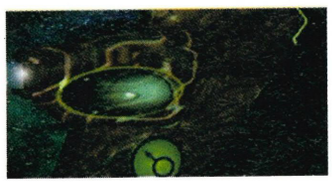
"...As the action inevitably hots up, it's possible to set your organisation's Research and Development arm onto inventing new weapons and bits of kit..."

Red Three Standing by

After a suitable target has been found it's time to blast off into the cold and empty expanse of space and get some. Each available ship has a comprehensive Head-Up Display that carries all the relevant information you should need, such as targeting data, velocity and weapons status. An exterior view is also available to assist with especially tight manoeuvres or just to get a better bearing on an attacker's positions relative to your fighter. Various cannons, energy lasers and missiles are at your fingertips, and can be cycled through easily with a flick of the circle button and sent streaking across the solar system.



Die, Die, Die! A hulking fat freighter is torn apart by your bolts.

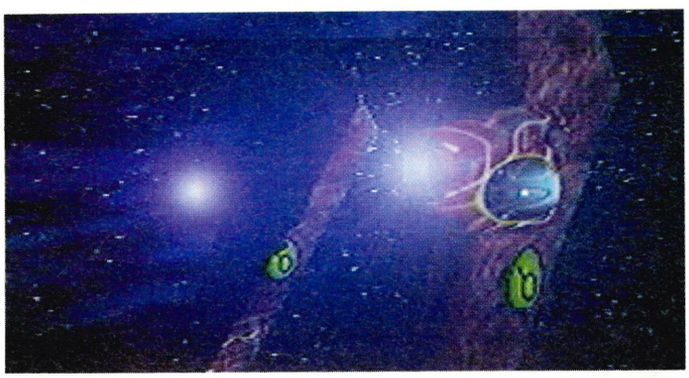


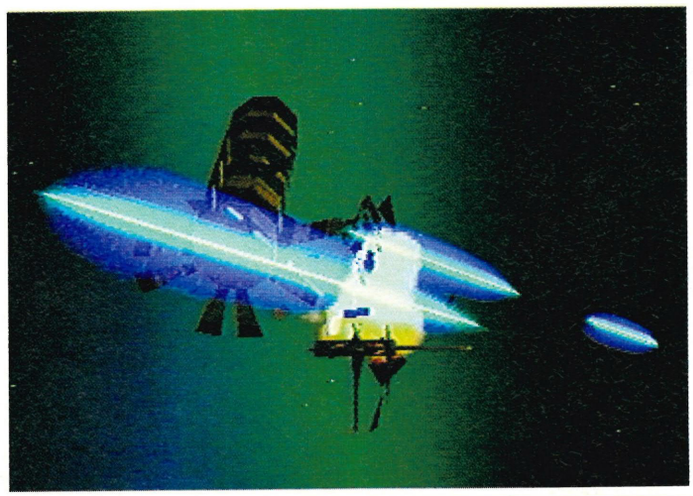


The craft you encounter are all extremely original in their design and it's almost a pity to blow them away (see boxout). Combat is fast and frenetic, as even automated freighter craft are armed to the teeth and have aggressive fighter escorts that home in on you relentlessly, peppering your ship with laser fire. To assist with avoidance there's a turbo thruster that jets you out of danger, but disengages the steering controls briefly. The dogfighting is in a similar vein to Colony Wars, but seems to be a bit less rigid in the mission parameters and time limits, at least at first, allowing the battles to go on for longer and without a set time limit. Your ship shakes when hit by unfriendly fire, which can make keeping track a mite difficult when you're in the thick of it, and sometimes it starts to spin out of control leaving you powerless to recover for a while, so caution is the key to success rather than gung-ho all-guns blazing kamikaze attacks. This can be problematic, though, as protagonist craft seem to like flying right up to your fighter and shooting away in your face, so keeping a high speed up is vital for success. However, a useful feature some of your ships possess is the









Energy weapons send blurs of light across your fighter's nose.

SHIP SHAPE AND BRISTOL FASHION

The ship design in Xenocracy is both original and compelling, the organic, waspish lines and mottled colour schemes strongly reminiscent of Seventies SF artist Chris Foss. Plus they pack a mean punch.

Shinikka

This is your standard scout fighter, lightly armed and armoured but extremely manoeuvrable. A good ship to cut your space-teeth with, it can outpace most of the less deadly Inner Planet ships.



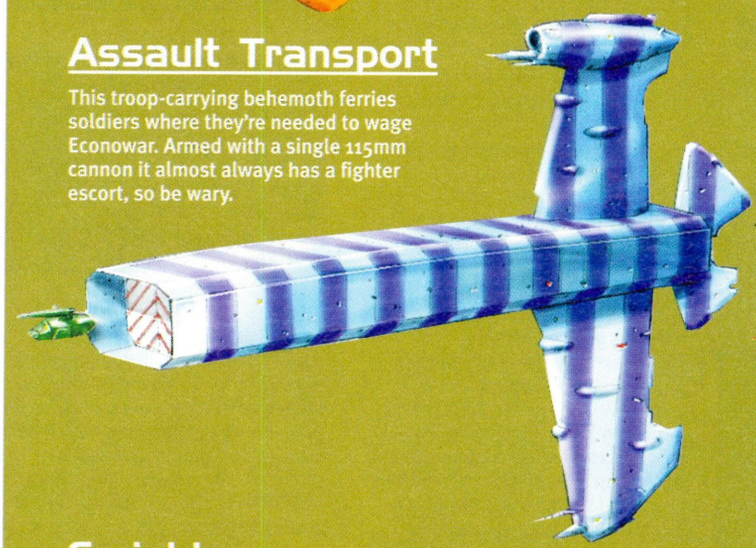
FireStorm

This Earth Dominion heavy fighter can enter light planetary atmospheres and its spaceframe is rated to an impressive 22g. Packing a 113 MegaWatt laser, stay away from its line of fire or it burns you away.



Assault Transport

This troop-carrying behemoth ferries soldiers where they're needed to wage Econowar. Armed with a single 115mm cannon it almost always has a fighter escort, so be wary.



Rage

This three-man craft is a pocket bomber being a scant 77m long. It has twin laser batteries and a large payload of explosives can be carried in its yellow and purple belly.



Freighter

Usually found in convoys, these behemoths are slow and unwieldy, and are unarmed, relying on their accompanying guardian squadrons. You get to see a lot of these fat bumble bees, just before you ice them.



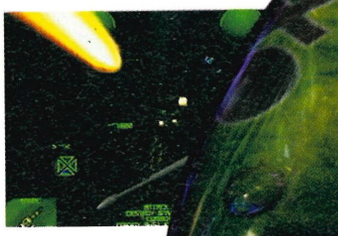
ST 81 Ishigaki

Favoured by renegade pirates, this multi-purpose destroyer cannot land on a planet's surface, but is strong and packs a reasonable wallop with its 25 MW cannon. The fan-like structure on its tail makes it highly recognisable (and an easier target).









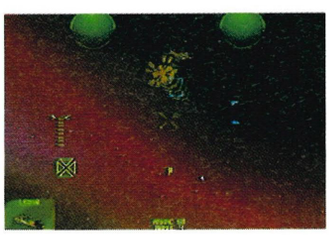


ability to launch dummy decoy ships that distract the enemy, who then hopefully fire on it, drawing the heat away from you for a few vital seconds. Not all the fighting is in zero-gravity, as some missions take place on terraformed planets with luridly-coloured atmospheres, and you have to deal with ground-based targets and opponents as well as airborne ones as you either protect or overrun the lycosite mining outposts.

"...Especially good looking are the energy blasts streaking past with a retina-searing burn..."

Interstellar Overdrive

While not seriously rivalling the visual impact of the abovementioned Colony Wars, the graphics in Xenocracy do zip by at quite a rate, and bear a great deal of detail on the ship's hulls at close range, something often lacking in some games of this ilk. Especially good looking are the energy blasts streaking past with a retina-searing burn, while on the other hand the explosions are less impressive, getting rather over-pixellated at close range and lacking the mad particle effects of Blast Radius, say. The planet-bound stages are also a pleasant change in rhythm from the interstellar warfare, with the various installations looking especially good as you circle them, although it has to be said the 'sky' as such also gets blocky the nearer you fly to it. Aurally it is quite a let-down, though, one of the laser cannons having an extremely annoying 'wooo-ooh-ooh' sound that got on the collective wick of all of us here in the office. Similarly the engine noise is a little shrill and whistly, but the rest of the weapon FX make up for this being solidly bassy and serious-sounding. The music is a few atmospheric bars of filmic pluckings that are fine at first, but inevitably tend to be ignored after about the hundredth loop or so. Surprisingly for such a well-presented game the FMV is quite weak visually, which while not directly affecting the quality of the game as such seems a bit third division, and is also a bit short to boot.

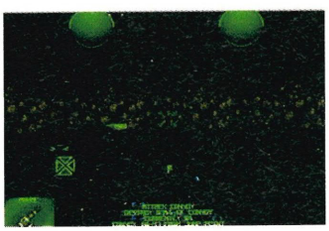


Let's Blow this Thing and Go Home

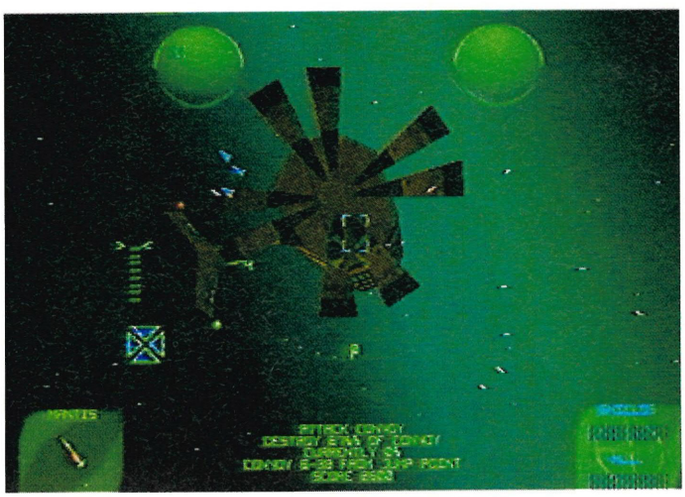
While being first and foremost a shoot-'em-up, Xenocracy shows a great deal of ambition in weaving in the strategic and political elements to the destruction, making it more intrinsic to the game as a whole rather than merely a flowery premise to rationalise the fighting. The long-term challenge is obviously considerable, and the programmers assure us that there are numerous twists and turns that pop up the further into the game one goes, chief among which one suspects are the strange and unnamed alien presence that is hinted at, who must be met with a united front by the four factions, under your incisive and fair-minded guidance of course. Taking its inspiration from such venerated titles as Elite and Wing Commander was an ambitious undertaking, but Grolier has managed to at least equal these elder statesmen in a shiny new PlayStation incarnation that should slake the thirst of those of you out there with delusions of galactic grandeur for months to come.

EPM
CHRISTIAN









Second Opinion

90% might be a bit on the generous side, but to be honest I haven't played into it as deeply as Christian has. The space combat isn't on a par with 'Colony Wars', but Xenocarcy does have the management side to back it up. Enjoyable overall.

Darren

The Score

Publisher	GROLIER
Developer	SIMIS
Released	MAY '98
Version	UK
Price	£39.99
Genre	STRATEGY/ SIMULATION
Players	1
Analog	✔
Memory card	✔

GAMEPLAY
8
ORIGINALITY
7
LIFESPAN
9
SOUND
5
GRAPHICS
8
OVERALL
90%

in summary

To infinity and beyond!

Cardinal Syn

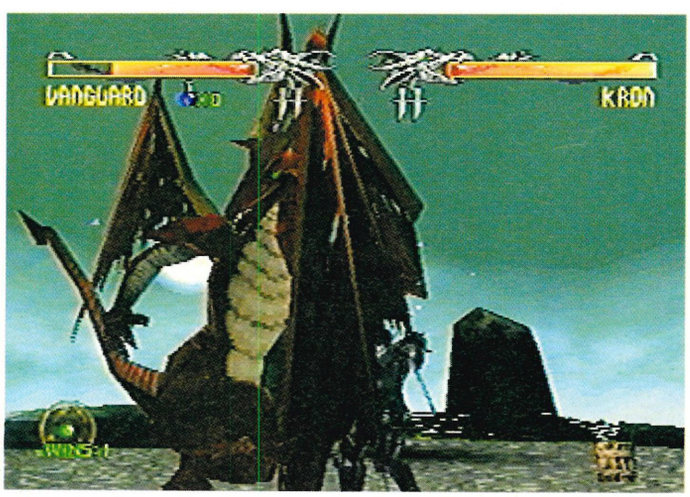
Repent your Syns... or get your head chopped off.

At last, someone has taken the standard beat-'em-up formula and turned it completely on its head. Okay, so Bushido Blade took a different angle on the theme, but you wouldn't call it a full on beat-'em-up; unlike Cardinal Syn...

When a game has no hype surrounding it you tend not to get excited, so I wasn't dancing around with joy when Cardinal Syn landed on my desk. We didn't know it was coming, and to tell the truth I didn't even know it was a beat-'em-up until I loaded it up and started playing.

A lack of hype surrounding a game usually means one of two things; it's fairly average, or it's crap. Cardinal Syn must have fallen into some black hole or something, though, because other games of this quality have the publisher and the press shouting from the rooftops. It just goes to show that hype doesn't equal a great game, and no hype doesn't always equal a turkey.

Developers Kronos have obviously taken a long, hard look at existing PlayStation beat-'em-ups and decided not to go down the same route with Cardinal Syn.



Kill Puff... your life depends on it!

Whereas most other developers would have looked to Tekken 2 and Soul Blade for inspiration, Kronos have looked at them to find out how not to produce a beat-'em-up. And for the most part, it's paid off.

Cardinal Syn is unlike any other fighter you own or have played, and on the face of it, much of the game could just be there for the novelty. For instance, Kronos have introduced chests containing pick-ups within each battle arena. This could be an extra-powerful sword, a health replenish or a special potion. Both characters can collect these items, so even when playing against the computer you both have the same chance to better your arsenal or replenish your health.

Adding pick-ups wouldn't have worked if Cardinal Syn wasn't a full 3D game, though. It would have been a little pointless if you didn't have to battle or run to get to the chests first. This is where Cardinal Syn comes into its own; your character can literally go anywhere within the battle arena and the 3D aspect doesn't simply come from a cack little side-step. You can walk into and away from the screen just as easily as walking left and right. It's made even easier when using a combination of analog and D-pad. The analog can be used to run around while the D-pad performs your fighting moves to perfection.

Kronos haven't left it here either, though it would have been enough. Each arena is carefully designed and crafted to make full use of the excellent 3D style of play. There's none of this basic square plan stuff seen in most PlayStation fighting games. The arenas come in all shapes and sizes, from a crescent-shaped underground volcano to a psychedelic round spinning top! The onus is on making the fighting environments perfect for the fighting style and Cardinal Syn





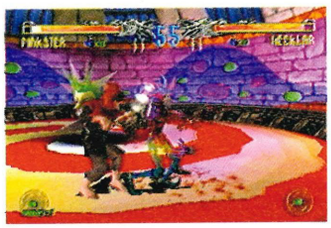


really shines because of it.

Not wanting to stop the ball rolling with the size and style of the arenas, we are also treated to interactive elements on every level. For instance, Plague's level has pools of acid that poison either of the fighters if they happen to step into one. Heckler, the evil jester, has one of the most psychedelic arenas you're likely to see in a beat-'em-up. It's on a multicoloured spinning wheel, with a statue of a jester with sharp prongs sticking out in the centre. Avoid these at all costs, but there's nothing stopping you hurling your opponent onto them. Other dangers include a moving mine cart, rivers of lava and countless spears and spikes lining the arenas.

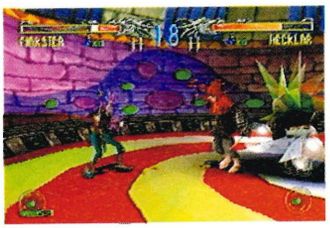
One of the levels is straight out of the Tomb Raider school of thought. As you're battling away, automatic crossbows fire spears across the room. The interactive element to Cardinal Syn adds much more to the beat-'em-up genre than a 'ring-out' ever could.

Cardinal Syn is a beat-'em-up, so we won't dwell on the storyline. The game is set in a medieval world, so military cyborgs and gun-toting cops are out. In are sneaky, dagger-wielding thieves, armour-clad knights and vixen-style warrior temptresses. It's good to see somebody has at last added some almost believable characters to a beat-'em-up. Things do go a bit supernatural at the end, but this can be forgiven because the finale is superb. Each character has their own story, shown in the form of a little CG sequence at the beginning of a tournament.











Accessibility

Cardinal Syn isn't as accessible as the usual fighting game fare. It takes a lot of getting used to because there's so much here that hasn't been seen before. The fighting is heavily based on combos, although this doesn't mean you have to string together 50 moves to be successful. Many of the combos are short but the result can

"...The interactive element to Cardinal Syn adds much more to the beat-'em-up genre than a 'ring-out' ever could..."



▲ Careful not to get stabbed in the back.

CUTTING SCENES

Each character has its own CG scene before you start a tournament. This one is for Hecklar the Jester, who witnesses Syn killing a knight. He's knocked out, but when he recovers he's just a little bit mad...



MEET THE FIGHTERS

There are eight contestants to choose from at first, although more become available later in the game. Here's a run-down on the basic fighters:

ORION



The first of the token babes found in any fighting game. She's pretty tough and fast, and her crooked sword is great for slashing.

HECKLAR



Hecklar, the Jester, witnessed Syn at her most evil, which turned him into the quick and mischievous fighting machine he is. His most prominent feature is one of the most wicked laughs you've ever heard.

NEPHRA



Nephra, the second token bird, is an Ancient Egyptian who carries a scythe-type of sword. She's certainly a babe and a very formidable opponent.

MCKRIEG



Mckrieg comes from a band of evil barbarians and although he has a bit of a pot belly he's still pretty tough. He's not particularly fast, but his huge axe and bomb chuck move make up for this.

MONGORO



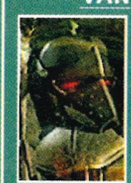
Telegram for Mongoro! This mutant scum feeds on his victims and has a special fart move. Not the type you'd want to take home to your parents.

PLAGUE



Plague was resurrected from dead by an ancient ceremony, but like all of the best zombies, bits regularly fall off him. He has a wooden leg and one of his favourite moves is to puke up all over ya feet!

VANGUARD

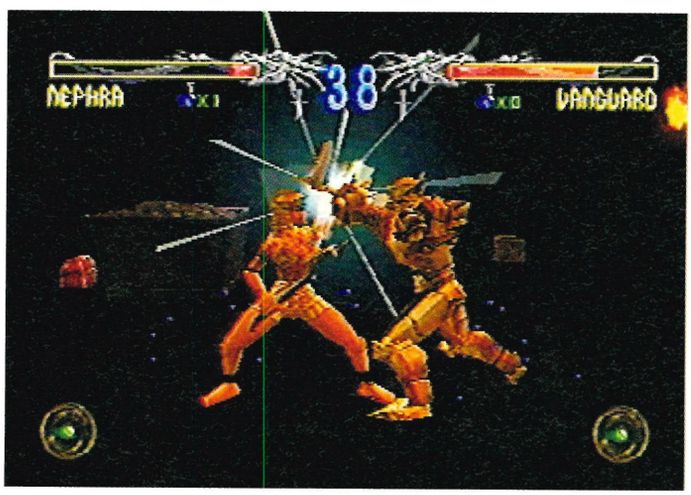


Vanguard fights for a rowdy band of knights. His long sword makes him one of the best characters in the game and he's extremely useful for attempting the head chop move.

FINKSTER



Finkster is a typical medieval thief. He's also a very fast fighter. His speed, alongside his double daggers, make him a top character to choose for beginners.



These pyrotechnics are caused by a devastating strike.



"...the two-player game provides some of the best beat-'em-up action this side of calling Chris Eubank a ponce with a stupid lisp..."

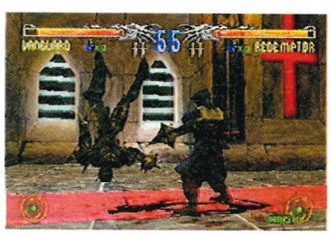
be just as devastating as any Tekken 20-hit supa-dupa combo. Cardinal Syn can be extremely unforgiving though. The learning curve is a little off centre, and although I found the game incredibly enjoyable and satisfying to play, it can also be frustrating beyond belief.

The first three battles are predictably easy. From here on in, though, things become ridiculously tough. Your computer opponents become artificial geniuses, able to predict nearly every move you perform, and counteract it perfectly. This would be fine if this type of intelligence was restricted to the last few characters in the game, but when it jumps from being easy to stupidly hard in one foul swoop it does grate a little. Of course, if you can stick with it, the effort does pay off. After fully getting to grips with the game and control you forget about the crappy learning curve and get into some of the best and most brutal combat we've seen on the PlayStation.



The combat is weapon based, although unlike Bushido Blade you can't choose your weapon. Each character has their own tool, be it a club, sword or a dagger but all of them are just as devastating in their own way. The weapons don't figure as highly as in Bushido Blade, but they're far more prominent than in







This is no time to be surfing the crimson wave!



Soul Blade, which is also weapons-based (supposedly). The action itself is extremely fast and fluid, which works well for the combo side of things. Each character has a selection of special moves and some of them are pretty spectacular, although they can be very tricky to execute. Apart from some of the computer characters being too 'ard, we couldn't really fault the fighting system. It's not quite up there with the big guns of this genre, but this is down to the fact that the difficulty level can be frustrating at times. This, however, doesn't count in the two-player game which provides some of the best beat-'em-up action this side of calling Chris Eubank a ponce with a stupid lisp.

The most notable fact about the combat is how blatantly brutal it can be. Most characters can pull of the usual stabs, swings and slices which usually result in delicious flurries of bright red blood splurting from the wound. Something I particularly like is the way that when the blood ejects from your victims it doesn't simply disappear. Towards the end of a bout, the floor is reminiscent of the Texas Chainsaw Massacre. There are no blood fairies mysteriously nicking the blood here.



Things get even more brutal when you start pulling off some of the fancy combos. You could end up chopping an arm off your opponent, or stabbing them through the heart, or (best of all) slicing their heads clean from their shoulders in a real f**k the BBFC style. I came across the old head chop by accident, and to say I was amazed would be the biggest understatement since someone said Bruce Lee was pretty tough. Alas, by the time I had called everyone over to watch it, the excitement was over and there was no replay to prove my barbaric handiwork.

"...Kronos have come up with a PlayStation fighter to take on the established champs..."

There are several modes of play alongside the tournament and two-player game, although none of them are different from any other beat-'em-up. The survival mode pits you against a succession of opponents in a desperate bid to survive, with just one health bar to your name. The team battle allows you to choose five characters to take on another team of five. Once one of your members dies, you move onto the next - it's as simple as that. The training mode is useful for practising combos, though you're not told how to perform the special moves, which is slightly disappointing.

Adding to the excellent level design, medieval atmosphere, and fast action combat is a superb hard-hitting film score soundtrack. The music fits the game perfectly, but it's the grunts, groans, screams and general sound effects that stand out the most.

With a little bit of thought, and let's face it, some obvious additions to the basic beat-'em-up format, Kronos have come up with a PlayStation fighter to take on the established champs. The gameplay is solid and smooth but most of all, fast. The graphics are almost faultless and the atmosphere is second to none. The only thing that Cardinal Syn doesn't have is hype. It also has a few little flaws, but marking a game down for being too tough isn't really fair so I won't. As it stands, Cardinal Syn is good and different enough to be an essential purchase, even if you already own the big beat-'em-ups.

EPM
SAUL







Second Opinion

Spraying gouts of blood, dismemberment, head loss. Marvellous! Fully interactive 3D arenas and the most inspired set of freak fighters make this the nastiest bit of sword-play since Soul Blade.

Darren

The Score

Publisher	SCEE
Developer	KRONOS
Released	MAY 29TH
Version	UK
Price	£39.99
Genre	BEAT-'EM-UP
Players	1-2
Memory Card	✓
Analog	✓

GAMEPLAY
9

ORIGINALITY
9

LIFESPAN
8

SOUND
9

GRAPHICS
9

OVERALL
90%

in summary

It would be a Syn not to buy it (doh!).

Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey '98

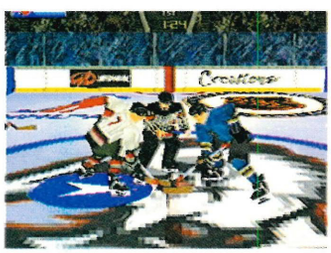
Not so jolly hockey sticks from Midway

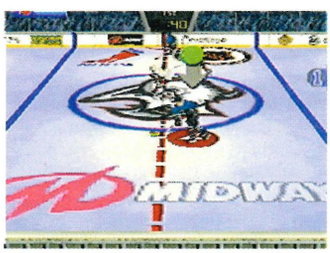
As probably the only even vaguely well-known international Ice Hockey professional, Wayne Gretzky has the dubious privilege of having had the most puck 'n' stick simulations released on the back of his name. However, most of we United Kingdomites don't give a fig for ice hockey, much less its hulking toothless stars, so the kudos of the licensee is somewhat lost in the transatlantic crossing. This means the game itself must stand alone on its merits against the huge swathes of rival titles that already exist on the PSX, particularly as one ice hockey rink looks much the same as the next, making it harder for any individual game to stick out from the crowd.

> "...this is a fully three-dimensional upgrade of the previous Gretzky stable, resplendent in its fresh new coat of polygons..."

At the moment the best sim available in this field is NHL Powerplay '98 (82% Issue Three), combining sharp graphics and solid gameplay with a cavernous depth of detail and comprehensive statistical options, must-haves for the serious hockey fan (who, let's face it, is the only type of games player likely to be interested in buying something like this). Nevertheless, the American market is huge for these games, so naturally we get them second hand. As development costs have already been spent, and the software houses may as well try and flog them over here and grab some cash. This, of course, leads to muggins games reviewers having to play and rate them in a seemingly endless spiral of NHL-this-or-that every few weeks. So, then, what have you got to offer us, Wayne?







Jaggedy Rink

As the title suggests, this is a fully three-dimensional upgrade of the previous Gretzky stable, resplendent in its fresh new coat of polygons. At a distance these do the job just fine, but get a little closer and the jaggedy edges of the vertices start to show, as obviously the finer detail (on the players and rink designs especially) has been kept quite simple to avoid slowdown. Most of the time this isn't noticeable, but the players aren't approaching the near-photorealism titles such as Powerplay '98 and NBA Pro '98 can boast. During the otherwise-competent replay mode this becomes especially obvious, as the players' faces are very simple representations, and not the creepy-but-impressive examples from the above front-runners. However, to be fair, graphical wizardry such as this is not the raison d'être for a sports game. What's much more important is the translation of the real-life playing

DEJA VU ALL OVER AGAIN

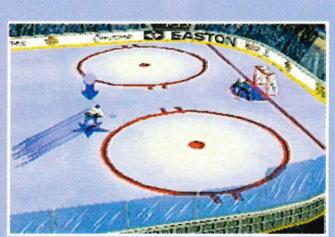
Most of WG 3D '98's snazzy features have been seen somewhere else before:



Extra hard shots leave a streak of light behind them like a vapour trail. Nice to look at, but it doesn't really add much to the game.



The fully interactive replay mode lets you review your finest moments from every angle and elevation. Just like NHL Powerplay, mind.



The 'burst' feature gives you an added impetus and again leaves a smear behind the player in question. Hmm, seems familiar...



A special shot that's on target causes the net to burst diabolically into flames. Definite shades of NHL Open Ice, or what?

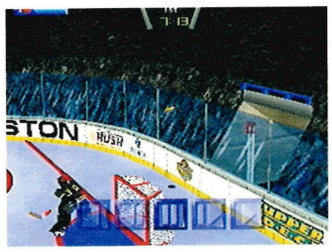
experience into a joypad-friendly form, and in this respect WG 3D is solidly respectable.

The usual schizophrenic button functions are present, dependant on whether you are in possession or not, so X doubles as shoot and bodycheck, for example. Dirty moves such as deliberate tripping with the stick and crafty hooking manoeuvres that whip the puck away from an opponent are also available. Other controls include the shot-blocking Kneel, a Dive option that sends your player sprawling in a last-ditch attempt to claw away a goal-bound puck and the handy Burst, which, at a flick of R1, grants a player a quick injection of instant velocity. It seems a little generous, though, as your player can accelerate from a standstill to what looks like about 40 mph in the blink of an eye. Two separate camera angles can also be linked together to a toggle on the lower-right shoulder button that switches between the two instantly, making it possible to have a favourite view for defending, say, and a completely different one for shooting.

"...there's no Create Player feature which has become an entertaining mainstay amongst the Div 1 sports sims..."

Also assisting matters is the puck itself, which wildly cycles through a profusion of Day-Glo colours, making it very easy to spot against the ice, solving a problem that has often plagued other hockey games. Things can get confusing very quickly if the puck is lost amongst the flailing skates and limbs. A similarly-flashing dot sits above the 'In Control' player's head, along with a dirty great arrow and a disc-







plus-chevron at his feet, making it extremely easy to spot who's your active man (as this image-overkill really should).

Ice Warriors

Irritatingly, the opposition seem to move with a lot more tactical savvy than your players, who always seem to crowd around the player with the puck, or worse still skate off in the wrong direction, making the sweeping position-based flow of an ice hockey game hard to emulate. Your team never seem to be in space or move into a scoring position. In addition, getting too close to a goalie usually results in him cuffing your player so he loses possession (and quite possibly consciousness), so again it's best to stay in a clear area and sharp-shoot. The goalie is a mean customer, intercepting even the most slappingest shots cooly. Your own goalkeeper is, irritatingly, not under any kind of control as far as I could discern, taking ages to throw the puck out and then to a player of his random choice. If you're in possession and stray too close, he even gives you a shove! Cheers, mate. Conceding a goal results in him pounding the ice in frustration, while the opposition celebrate by lifting one skate up in the air and lording it big time.

Fortunately, to help you sharpen your technique there's a practice mode you can use to help with one-on-one shots at goal, offensive teamwork plays without an opposition or a single player defending against five attackers. Different formations and plays appear to be absent both in pre-match planning and during the game, so no help there then. In fact, as far as I could ascertain, the Arcade setting disappointingly plays much the same as the Simulation equivalent anyway. In addition to this, there's no Create Player feature (which has become an entertaining mainstay amongst the Div 1 sports sims), with only the reams of impenetrable player facts and figures from what I assume to be fully complete US and Canadian rosters to choose from. As a package, WG 3D lacks style and polish all round, a fact especially endemic in the weak sound aspect of the game. The music's so bland and forgettable I had trouble working out what style it could be called so as to critique it, while the FX are extremely nondescript, being only the slap of stick on puck, puck on barrier, and a weak 'flomp' sound on collisions. Where are the bone-snapping crunches and authentic grunts and groans? The announcer is curt to the point of monosyllabism, prattishly shouting "Bombs Away!" at virtually every attempt on goal, while the crowd actually boo (in a very truncated manner) when you miss! Ungrateful swines...

Bells and Whistles

The real problem with this game is that it lacks many of the bells and whistles that spice up modern sports simulations. Those it does possess are distinctly second hand (see boxout), seem a bit flashy and are strictly for show. Compounding these errors is the never-ending wait between screens while the game loads or even just goes back to the main menu. I timed it - it's at least a minute, and it had the cheek to show two different 'Loading, Please Wait'-type screens in the meantime. In fact the most exciting spell I had from the game was watching the free-camera demo mode, which showed off the speed of the graphics and play admirably, but only served to highlight the flaws in the real deal.

As the overcrowding and standards in the sports game field inexorably increase, to make itself heard a game must be remarkable in every aspect, not just competent in most.

CHRISTIAN



The hard rubber disc shoots at the eagerly waiting goal mouth.

Second Opinion

I've seen enough hockey games this year, we don't really need to see any more. Especially when they're as dodgy as this. Wayne, take up another sport!

Darren

The Score

Publisher	SCEE
Developer	MIDWAY
Released	OUT NOW
Version	UK
Price	£34.99
Genre	SPORTS SIM
Players	1-4
Memory Card	✓

GAMEPLAY
6
ORIGINALITY
3
LIFESPAN
5
SOUND
4
GRAPHICS
7
OVERALL
55%

in summary

Not Greatsky by any stretch of the imagination.

Alundra



Alundra, Psygnosis' long-awaited RPG, has been described as a 'Zelda beater'. As the Nintendo classic was a masterpiece on both SNES and Game Boy formats, this is no mean boast. The game's certainly, erm, 'inspired' by Zelda, but is it the better game? Read on...

Religious bigotry; don't you just love it? Salman Rushdie in hiding because of a geriatric lunatic's death threat, American heavy metal bands hounded by TV evangelists who take more money in a single collection than we'll see in a lifetime and bloodshed across India as the Hindus slug it out with the Sikhs. It's against such a background that Alundra's adventures begin.

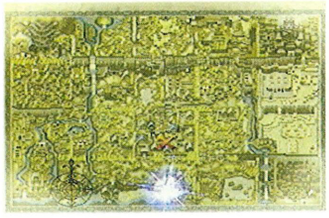
The people of Inoa were a peaceful lot who worshipped their gods through idols. One day, King Snow (who the manual describes as 'righteous' - doh!) decreed all idols must be destroyed and idol worship should cease. In the best tradition of the devout, those who opposed him were burned at the stake. Nice guy!

The people of Inoa soon started having terrible dreams which tore into their subconcious. This seemed more than merely the effects of fear. They seemed to be under some sort of supernatural attack. Without their idols, the villagers found it difficult to call on their gods for help, and the tribe of Elna (who could enter the dreams of the terrorised villagers) remained hidden as they feared their powers would be misunderstood.



As the situation worsened and inexplicable events occured during waking hours, the Priest of the Sanctuary cried out that the gods were exacting a terrible revenge on the people for destroying their idols. With gods like that, is it any wonder their religions caused so much suffering? As Nietzche once said, "Is man one of God's mistakes or is God one of Man's mistakes?".

Alundra is gifted with the ability to walk between the worlds of the conscious and the unconscious. He's already tried to help people curb their terrible nightmares, but is cursed by his lack of knowledge of his skills. In his own dreams, Alundra is met by Lars, a cloaked guardian who instructs him to go to the village of Inoa. Lars tells our hero of the evil Id that ravaged the world so many years ago, and that this evil will awaken again in a lake north of the town. Alundra follows Lars' advice, and boards a ship heading for Inoa...





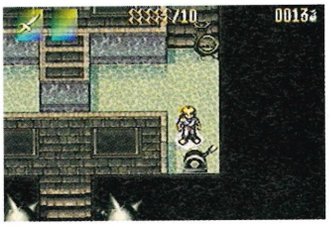




Alundra selects items from his ever growing inventory.









Puzzling Plagarism

So begins Alundra, an epic but infuriating RPG which, despite its shortcomings, still manages to entertain. It's one of those titles you can criticise all day but still play through the night - it's satisfying and frustrating in equal measures. Let's start at the beginning.

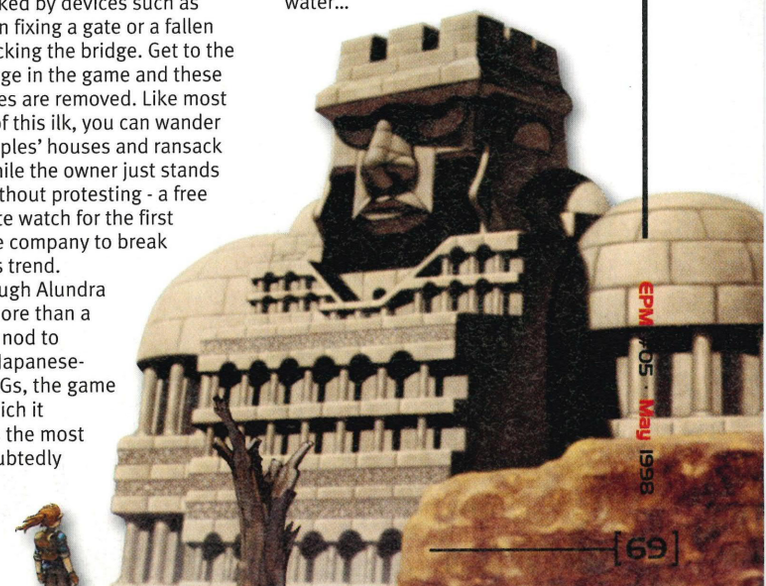
The first thing that strikes you about the game is how unoriginal it is. It's the same old formula rehashed for the PlayStation; characters stand around doing nothing until you speak to them, and then they offer a short soundbyte which may or may not be useful. Beds have a convenient and hidden gap between the pillow and the bedsheets so you can walk 'into' your bed and rest, saving is achieved by using the diary in your room and areas of the map you're not allowed to explore

> **"...Alundra is gifted with the ability to walk between the worlds of the conscious and the unconscious..."**

are blocked by devices such as workmen fixing a gate or a fallen tree blocking the bridge. Get to the right stage in the game and these blockages are removed. Like most games of this ilk, you can wander into peoples' houses and ransack them while the owner just stands there without protesting - a free chocolate watch for the first software company to break with this trend.

Although Alundra offers more than a passing nod to several Japanese-style RPGs, the game from which it borrows the most is undoubtedly Zelda. Even the opening sequence, where Alundra is shipwrecked and washed onto a sandy beach, is a direct steal from the Game Boy's Zelda: Link's Awakening. You control a single character, not a party of fortune-seekers, and advancement is through finding new items and increasing your maximum hit points rather than gaining experience and progressing through levels.

As you make your way through the adventure, you find a sword you can 'charge' by holding down the attack button, an iron flail that smashes rocks, treasure chests, some appearing after solving a puzzle, bombs to use for demolition or as a weapon, pressure plates which open doors, crates and vases you can pick up and smash, some of which hold goodies, an ice wand which burns through certain blockages, merman boots to let you walk through water...



CRYSTAL BALLS...



If you're between missions and don't know what to do next, talk to Yustel; she gives you a snippet of advice, or for 15 Gilders, more detailed information. If you don't want to pay, save your game, talk to her then reload.

sound familiar? If you've played Zelda, you'll feel at home to say the least, but it you haven't (and remember, Zelda never appeared on the PSX) all this will be new; let's face it, you can do worse than ape one of the most celebrated games ever to hit the home machines.

Tepid Tec Specs

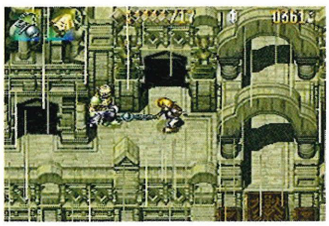
Not only has Alundra shamelessly 'borrowed' from Zelda, the game also looks like it would be at home on Zelda's host machine, the SNES. It doesn't even attempt to make technological advances over 16-bit RPGs like Breath of Fire, Secret of Mana and the big 'Z'. Psygnosis themselves admit the game doesn't tax the PlayStation, but instead leaves plenty of power for the plot and gameplay. Unlike Blood Omen there's no FMV sequences or sampled speech; instead we get a cartoon intro and text windows. You can speed up the text by holding the Square button, but not cancel it, which is annoying if you speak to the same person twice and have to sit through their wibbling once more.

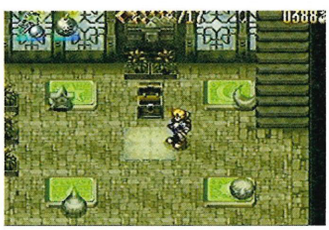
Alundra's world is shown in a 3D perpective, with the graphics obviously drawn onto a square grid. There's no 3D modelling here, though. You can't move the perspective to look behind objects as you can in the forthcoming Breath of Fire III, and the animation is sparse, and definitely not up to today's standards. Everything in the game casts a similarly-sized circular shadow too - people, bees, wrought-iron gates, square blocks; everything. There's no on-screen map to be filled in as you progress, an unforgivable omission, and while the background muzak is typically awful, at least it's unobtrusive.

> "...Combat is a real-time hack and slash affair which takes place on the game map; no waiting for combat scenery to load here..."

Ace Adventuring

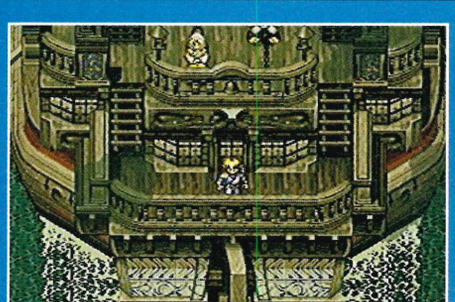
Despite its lacklustre technical specs and ferocious lack of originality, in the main Alundra plays pretty well. Like Zelda (ohmygawd, another comparison) it leans on the arcadey style of RPG action. Combat is a real-time hack and slash affair which takes place on the game map; no waiting for combat scenery to load here. When fighting, you strike out with your chosen weapon beat-'em-up style, the number of hits required to fell the foe depending on the weapon and monster in question. The key to fighting large numbers of enemies (which you do often) is to bunch them together and take them as they come; you can hit more than one foe in a single strike, and if you ensure you're not fighting a war on two fronts, victory is yours. Unfortunately many monsters take a huge number of hits, making combat a tedious experience. It's a pity the 'fight' and 'talk/examine' functions are delegated to the same button too - it looks ridiculous when you try to talk to a character and instead aim a swipe at his head because you weren't close enough, your weapon going straight through





GETTING YOU STARTED...

Stuck at the beginning?



As the game starts, you're on a boat. Look around. Get used to the controls.



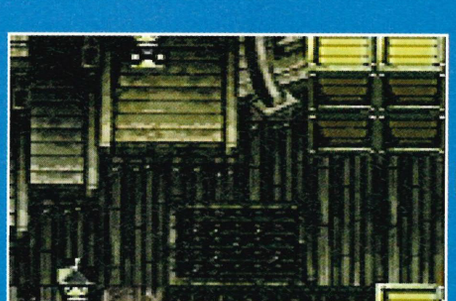
Talk to this guy to find out where your cabin is. Go north into the room under the mast.



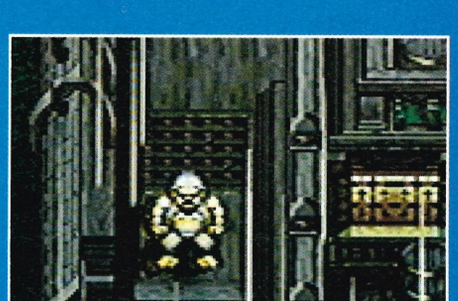
Talk to Merrick. He goes to attend to the ship.



Go to your cabin (the room next door, the other side of the cracked wall) and get into bed (ie. walk into the gap between the pillow and the sheets). In your dreams you see Lars and Melzas arguing.



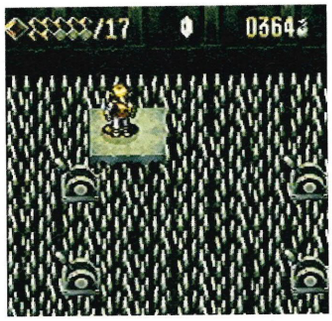
When you awaken, the ship is being tossed and turned. The door is jammed, so jump through the gap in the wall which was previously just a crack. Leave the cabin.



There's a fearsome storm in progress. The captain is confident he can make it, but the ship hits a reef.

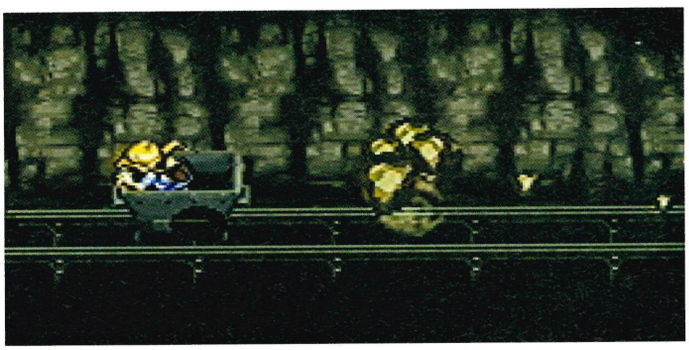
as if he were a ghost. Worse still, it's potentially disasterous to accidently read a notice in the middle of a battle when you were trying to slash a nearby baddie.

As well as your weapon, you can ready one other object by selecting it on the inventory screen. Bombs are useful; drop one and force a baddie onto it as it explodes, or leave an explosive gift for an end-of-mission monster who's standing still, summoning rocks from the sky or other such attacks. If the battle's going badly, pause the game to access the inventory screen once more and switch to herbs, which you can activate during combat to give you a health boost. Die and you restart from your last save position unless you have the wonder essence which raises you where you stand.



Missions come in two varieties; those taking place in physical locations around the village of Inoa, and those set in the mind of an afflicted dreamer. They're basically the same; make your way through chambers and passages, mashing monsters, solving puzzles and taking out the inevitable big baddie at the end. Making your way from Inoa to the location of your next task (uncovered by talking to villagers or, if you're really stuck, Yustel and her crystal ball) offers tantalising glimpses of what's to come. You might pass a locked door, a blocked cave or a treasure chest you can't yet reach. Remember where they are; when you have the right object, come back. The game is mercifully full of bonus areas and treasures incidental to the main missions, so you've plenty to do if you get stuck.

As mentioned earlier, some paths away from Inoa are blocked until you reach a certain point in the game. For example, a workman fixing the gate blocks progress south until you're ready to go to Tarn's Mansion. This is a useful device which focuses the player's attention on the task in hand and avoids unnecessary and aimless wandering. The key to making a specific event happen is artificial at times. For example, at one stage you find two characters in a nightmare state. You know what to



MUSIC TEST



Some time after the Desert of Despair, you can talk to Kohei the composer in the house to the south-west of the village. He plays you some of his 'hits' from the game. This is a neat way to offer a sound test.



Surely not! Anyway, here's a guide to your adventures from the first step to the first save point:



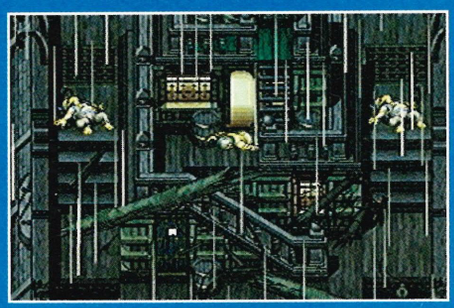
Go into the LEFT of the two cabins around half way up the ship. Talk to the men in there, then lift and throw the crates along the east wall and see what you find.



The guy running up and down the starboard side of the ship tells you to go back to your quarters.



Go and see Merrick again - he's at the wheel of the ship in the room under the mast. He tells you to rest. Take his advice.



The ship is smashed to pieces...



...and you're washed up on a beach, rescued by Jess the swordsmith.



The 'special diary' Jess refers to is a Save Game position. Use it to record your progress.

COLOURFUL CAST...

You get to meet a fair few friends and foes as you fight and fiddle your way through the game. Here are the major men and famous females...

ALUNDRA



Or, to put it another way, you. Alundra can enter people's dreams and change the outcome. In one of his own dreams, Alundra was told to go to Inoa. What awaits him when he gets there?

RONAN



Ronan, the only priest in the village, fears the village will forget their gods without their idols. He still offers his teachings to the townsfolk.

JESS



Not Postman Pat's cat, but the Inoan swordsmith. He's a very caring person who sees a lot of his deceased son in Alundra. He makes many custom weapons for the young adventurer.

ZAZAN



The leader of the rare white monkeys lives in the woods just north-west of the village of Inoa. He wants the villagers on the endangered species list.

SEPTIMUS



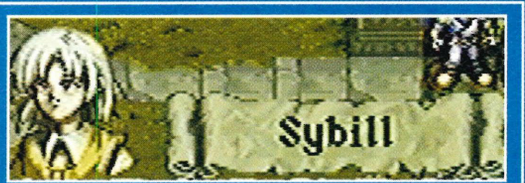
Septimus has been researching dreams and nightmares ever since he arrived in Inoa three years ago. He hopes dreams can one day be used to save the people from the raging Id.

NAVA



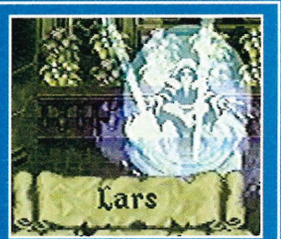
South of the village of Inoa lives the wise man Nava. He's stubborn and very private in nature, and the townsfolk think he knows more than he's telling.

SYBILL



Sybill can only dream when she's awake. Her frighteningly accurate visions of future events often terrify the townsfolk.

LARS



Not Metallica's drummer, but the wise man of Alundra's dreams. It is Lars, one of the guardians that confined Melzas so many years ago, who tells Alundra to go to Inoa.

YUSTEL



This old crone will, for a small fee, use her crystal ball to give advice. She's watched the village descend into darkness, and is a mine of information.

MELZAS



Who is this creature? Could he be the alien of legends, come from beyond the stars to feed off people's spiritual energy?

GILES



After losing both parents in a freak accident, Giles became very religious. He lives with his sister Kisha and works in the Sanctuary with Chancellor Ronan.









SHOPPING...



Alundra buys his supplies from the stores found in and around the village of Inoa. The system works well, but, annoyingly, you can only buy one item at a time. If, for example, you want eight herbs you must take a single herb, buy it and then go back for the second and subsequent items. You have to sit through the storekeeper offering the price and asking if it's OK eight times. Aaaargh - how hard would it be to let the player input a quantity?

"...The game is mercifully full of bonus areas and treasures incidental to the main missions, so you've plenty to do if you get stuck..."

do - you must enter the dreamer's mind, but after talking to everyone around them, you still can't do so until you've tried to talk to one of the sleepers. This can seem very restrictive, though Alundra avoids the trap of allowing the computer to take over too often, giving the player the impression of helping the game along rather than playing it. Characters who ask the same question over and again until they get the answer they want are annoying, but thankfully rare.

It's a pity the puzzles are so flat when you get into the dungeons, though. Most are based around switches which open doors. Sometimes opening one door closes another, sometimes activating the switches is a puzzle, usually involving pressure pads, and with others it's a case of leaping from platform to platform in a given way or arranging objects or tasks into a specific order. Tantalising clues are offered by plaques on the walls. A typical puzzle is a gate near the start which rises when you stand on a nearby pressure plate, but falls again when you leave it. Nearby there are several heavy barrels; anyone who's played an RPG before knows exactly what to do next. There's a little trial and error involved in solving some puzzles, but they demand little traipsing around; it never gets to the ridiculous levels of Myst, where you turn a dial, walk across the playing area to see what it did, then back again to turn it some more (yawn). There are some very clever logic puzzles involved, some of which are extremely satisfying when solved, but more variety would go a long way.

Alundra Vs. Zelda

Alundra's being marketed as a Zelda-beater, but is it better than the SNES classic? Unfortunately, it isn't even its equal. Alundra lacks an on-screen map drawn in as the player explores new areas. As it centres on the main village, with excursions out to specific areas to complete specified tasks, you're unlikely to get too lost, though.



This skeleton is the same bloke who died near the entrance.

Alundra sees you collecting new artefacts as you progress, but its sheer size (it's huge) makes this appear a very slow process. You can play for an entire weekend without seeming to get anywhere. The storyline, about gathering seven Sacred Crests, isn't particularly strong and doesn't unfold in the same way as that of, say, Suikoden. Coupled with samey missions, this saps the will to go on. The game's end-of-level bosses are just bigger versions of its standard foes too.

Alundra isn't as good as Zelda, and as it's so obviously derivative, such comparisons are inevitable. However, this doesn't mean it's a bad game - it's certainly one of the best arcade-style RPGs on the PSX. It's not as difficult as some RPG affairs, and has a good learning curve - it's ideal for beginners. It's absolutely huge, though its size is at the expense of depth - I suspect most gamers will play it for a while and then come back to it later rather than cane it to death until it's completed.

No, Alundra isn't Zelda's superior, or even its equal, but it isn't a bad game in its own right. Just don't climb over Final Fantasy VII or Castlevania X to get to it.

EPM
IAN



Second Opinion

If you can live with the 16-bit Nintendo style visuals you may enjoy Alundra. If you settle for no less than visual orgasms then stick with FFVII. A game for hardcore RPG'ers only.

Chris

The Score

Publisher	PSYGNOSIS
Developer	SCE JAPAN
Released	MARCH
Version	UK
Price	£39.99
Genre	RPG
Players	1
Memory Card	✓

GAMEPLAY
8
ORIGINALITY
6
LIFESPAN
8
SOUND
6
GRAPHICS
7
OVERALL
83%

in summary

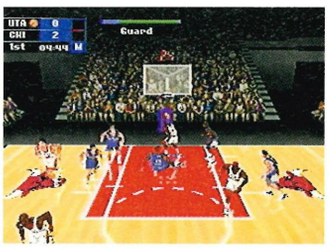
A good game, but not the Zelda-zonker it claims to be.

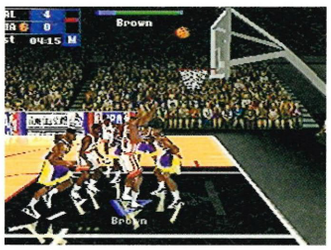
NBA Fastbreak '98

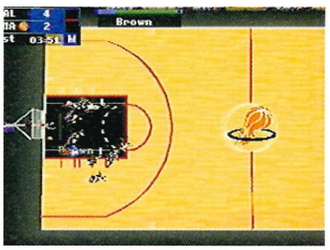
Shoot those hoops (and the headline writer)...

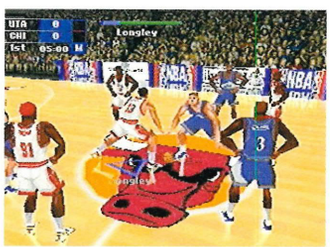
Basketball. Run at your opponent's hoop, take a shot, lose possession and the other team run at your hoop and shoot. Now they lose possession and it's your turn to run at the hoop and shoot; yawn! You're five points behind with only two minutes on the clock, but don't fret - in the take-it-in-turns world of basketball, scoring is so ridiculously frequent you can easily notch up a dozen points in 30 seconds; yawn! Why play for an hour when only the last few minutes have any significance? As you may have gathered, I'm not a great fan of basketball, and while NBA Fastbreak '98 didn't win me over, there's no denying its quality. NBA Fastbreak '98 is targeted at the basketball-loving sports sim freak rather than the arcade action aficionado; NBA Hang Time it ain't. Accurate simulation is the order of the day, with a long-term learning curve emphasised rather than pick-up-and-playability, though it's far from difficult to get started.

You certainly can't fault the game for options. You can go for 28- or 54-game seasons, as well as the NBA official season, playoffs and an all-star game. You can, of course, go for an exhibition quickie too. All 29 NBA teams are present, kited out in authentic strips and playing on representations of realistic courts, and all the genuine players are there too. There are also Eastern and Western All-Star teams. Each hoop-shooter has 16 personal stats, representing the skills and weaknesses of the genuine player, and their unique artificial intelligence make the pixelated pros play in a manner which represents their human counterparts, though this is only really noticeable when watching the stars. For example, the Chicago Bulls' Luc Longley is an expert 3-pointer, ie. good at shooting high-scoring, long-distance hoops. If he misses, the freaky, rainbow-haired Dennis Rodman scoops the rebound and dunks for two points. Naturally, this goes unnoticed unless you're basketball crazy enough to be familiar with their styles of play, but it's a neat if inessential touch. Also worth a mention are their signature moves. If a player's famous for one-handed dunks, for example, his NBA Fastbreak '98 counterpart can reproduce this accurately.











Why does the Miami Heat logo look like a turnip with a halo?

Simulation and arcade modes are available, the latter offering a more relaxed interpretation of the rules. You can adjust virtually every other aspect of the game too, such as quarter lengths, game speed and skill level (there are three). Substitutions can be automatic or manual, and you can opt to be notified of auto-substitutions. No shortage of options, then - but what about the game?

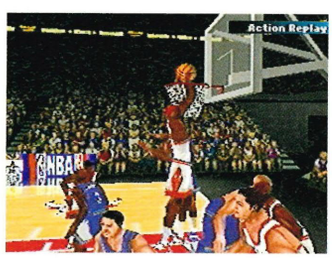
> **"...Accurate simulation is the order of the day, with a long-term learning curve emphasised rather than pick-up-and-playability..."**

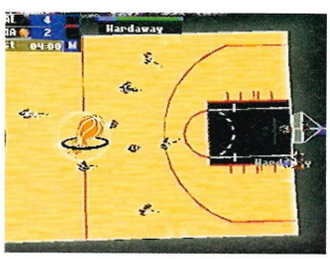
Back Court Violation

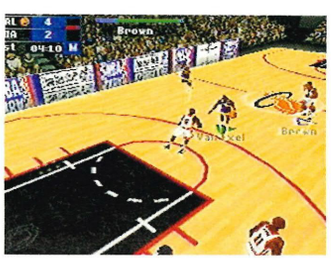
Aesthetically, it's a game of two halves. The graphics are stunning, with polished hardwood floors offering just enough reflection to look good without becoming confusing, and some of the most detailed crowds I've ever seen in a video game. They're very reserved compared to, say, an English football crowd, but again that's realistic. The players are terrific too, moving and animating like a dream. The word 'realistic' is being over-used in this review, but I'm going to use it again - they're realistic, running convincingly without appearing to slide along or float above the floor, and the dunking and dribbling is spectacular without looking ridiculously superhuman. I've seen better drawn sportsmen, but when you see them in motion you realise the detail-to-frame-rate ratio is just right.

Unfortunately the sound lacks the polish and quality of the graphics, with the ball sounding like someone kicking an oil barrel and the crowd's monotonous roar being more like a force ten gale in a leafy woodland. The commentator's a pain too, stating the obvious in a voice which sounds like Jim Bowen doing an impression of Bill Clinton.

As one would expect, the controls offer differing actions depending on whether you're defending, attacking or attacking but not in possession (yes, you can opt to pass and retain control of your player instead of switching to the man with the ball), but for once this seems entirely natural and reasonably intuitive. It's far more fun and much easier to play in offence than defence, but that's to be expected. By setting the



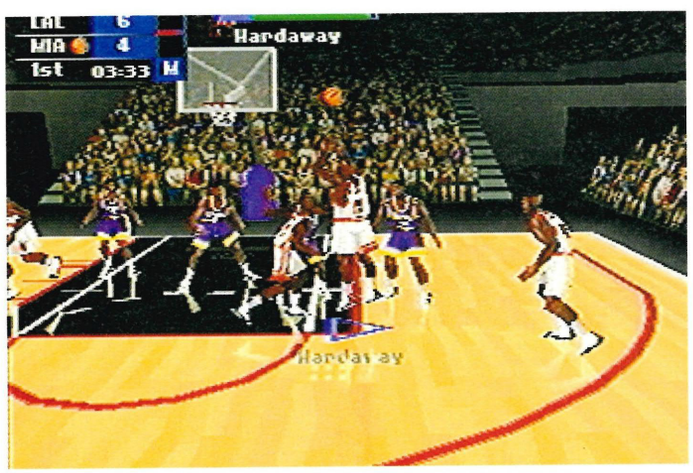




MEET THE TEAMS

All 29 NBA teams are included in the game, as well as two all-star sides. Here are some of the logos.





I hope he's using extra-strong under-arm deodorant.

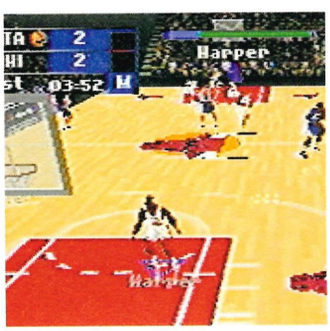
"...Over all, NBA Fastbreak '98 is a fine game. It won't win over non-hoop-shooting fans like myself, but it was never intended to do so..."

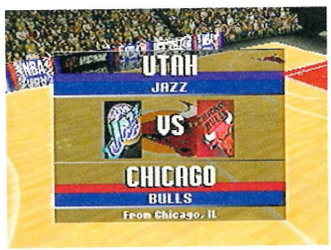
skill level to 'rookie' and getting used to the game you can adopt the more complex manoeuvres one at a time, giving you the opportunity to learn the ropes before moving on to a more challenging setting when you're ready. Take a hint too - it's easier to score if you're in a clear space than if surrounded by opposition. Again, the game is true to life. NBA Fastbreak '98 was never going to enjoy the pick-up-and-playability of the unashamedly arcadey NBA Hang Time, but it's as intuitive as could possibly be expected.

Naturally, a snazzy, accurate sports sim with the emphasis firmly on 'simulation', stands or falls on its lastability. Once again, NBA Fastbreak '98 is not lacking. As mentioned earlier, the computer-controlled teams behave in the same way as their real-life counterparts, the artificial intelligence being of a very high standard. The only real fly in its ointment is its failure to react to the timer in the dying seconds. If the computer team's ahead, it makes no attempt to retain possession and waste time. If it's behind, it doesn't speed up play and go for quick baskets. This is hardly a fatal flaw, but it's a flaw nonetheless.

Overall, NBA Fastbreak '98 is a fine game. It won't win over non-hoop-shooting fans like myself, but it was never intended to do so. Instead it concentrates on offering the true basketball fan a playable, realistic game with all the presentation frills and technical depth you could wish for. If you wear your LA Lakers vest with pride, video the late night basketball matches on Channel 4 and wince when you see Dennis Rodman in a wrestling ring, this game's an essential purchase. If you're a sports sim fan who likes a good game of basketball, it's definitely worth a look. It's a wonderfully playable game in its own right, though not for those who think a dunk is what you do with a cup of tea and a digestive and an alley-oop is a steeply-sloping passageway.

EPM
SAUL





Second Opinion

If it's not a bloody hockey game then it's a basketball sim. God, take me to a better place. Where yankee sports can't be converted in low-grade videogames. Please!

Darren

The Score

Publisher	GT INTERACTIVE
Developer	MIDWAY
Released	SUMMER 98
Version	UK
Price	£34.99
Genre	SPORTS SIM
Players	1-8
Memory Card	✓
Multi Tap	✓

GAMEPLAY
9
ORIGINALITY
6
LIFESPAN
8
SOUND
5
GRAPHICS
8
OVERALL
89%

in summary

One of the best sim-style basketball games to date.

Premier Manager '98

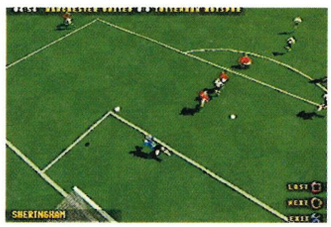
You win some, you lose some, then you get the sack...



The life of a Premier League manager must be pretty strenuous. If you, or more importantly your team, don't come up to scratch you find yourself ejected straight out of the turnstile at a great rate of knots. It seems no matter what is said or done, it always comes down to the manager. The problem is once those 11 highly-paid and very fragile players get out on the pitch the manager can't really do a lot. It's up to the team to produce the goods for those 90 minutes, so why the hell is it always the manager who gets the boot? Anyway, Gremlin's Premier Manager '98 causes no such worries, because it's only a game...

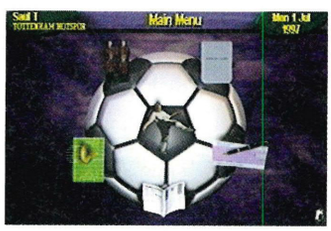
> "...You won't find yourself getting bored because the statistics are constantly changing in front of you..."

The problem is, that after just half an hour of playing you find yourself completely and utterly sucked into the world of soccer management. Even non-football fans will find themselves deeply involved in the incredibly simple yet highly addictive gameplay. It does help if you have a modicum of football knowledge so you know which players are any good in real life, though. This is the biggest problem for the non-football enthusiast playing Premier Manager '98. If you don't know the good players, you can't set your teams up as well as a football fan could. It's made much easier, though, by the inclusion of a star system that gives the players ratings out of five. This is a God-send for the uninitiated and makes the game much easier to play.

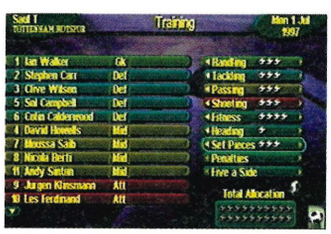


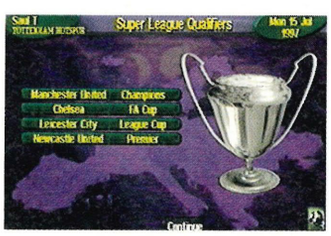
Once you've chosen your team out of all 92 English clubs from all of the 1997-1998 divisions, you get the











BIG MONEY

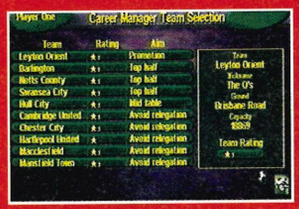


As a manger you have a number of different jobs on top of smoking cigars and handing out oranges whilst swearing at your players in the changing rooms. One of these jobs on Premier Manager '98 is to look after your club's finances and attempt to make your bank balance swell. We're not talking pence here either. Once you get up into the Premier League, you get to spend millions and millions of pounds of other people's money. The main source of income is your gate takings, so you have to set this accordingly. Overcharge and punters revert to watching Sunday League Soccer. Undercharge and you end up losing lots of cash you could have made. Try changing the ticket price and watching how the attendance figures react. this way you should be able to find the perfect ticket price.



Check out the top teams from all the leagues.

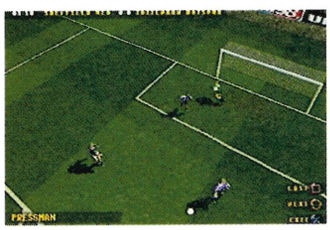
CHANGE OF CAREER, SIR?

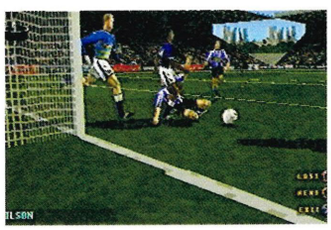


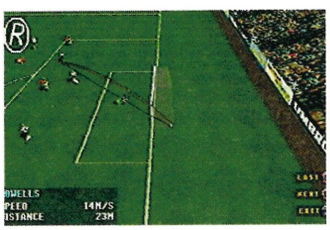
There are two types of one-player game on Premier Manager '98. The first is the straightforward Manager game, where you take over the team of your choice. The second mode, Career, gives you a choice of ten different teams, each with different aims to fulfil. These aims include simply avoiding relegation, staying in the top half of the table or getting the team promoted. The Career mode is a little tougher than the Manager mode because you get the bullet if you don't fulfil the aims quickly enough.

chance to play a few friendlies before the season kicks off properly. This gives you the chance to check out the different players in your squad without the risk of losing any points. It also lets you try out some different playing styles and team formations.

> "...You can watch how your team plays in certain situations and change your tactics accordingly..."



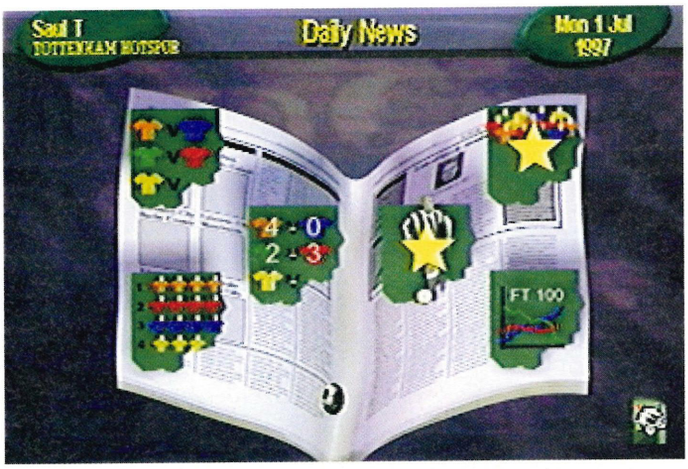




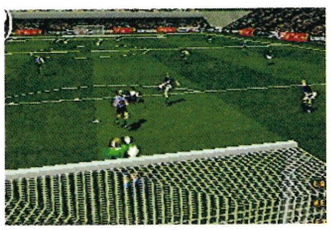


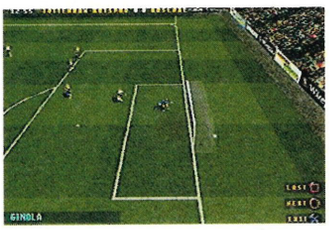
GOAL!!!!

There are ten formations to choose from, so most budding managers should be able to find a formation that suits them and their team. Of course, a football management game would be pretty bland if it was only formations that you could play around with. The Team Tactics screen allows you to adjust various vital aspects of your team's game such as style of passing, tackle strength and overall strategy. You need to use different combinations of these settings to find the best tactics for your team. It doesn't stop when you find a good set-up, though. You need to constantly review your team tactics and formations to set them according to the opposition you're playing. In fact, I found you need to check your team tactics before every match. This helps in keeping the game moving and you won't find yourself bored with the constant team tweaking.



The Daily News, where you can access money, match & team info.

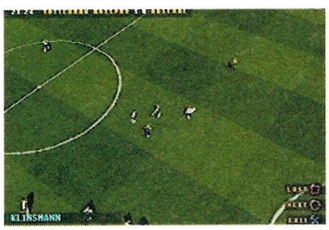




All of the players in the game are based on their real-life counterparts. In fact, Premier Manager '98 tries to be as realistic as possible, even down to the ageing of your players. You have to keep an eye on your squad at all times or things may get out of hand. For a start, there's injuries to take care of, then you have to check for bookings - you don't want to send a potential nutter into an FA Cup match with two yellow cards already under his belt. You also have to watch your players' percentage score. If this gets too low you should take them out of the team for a few matches and let them recuperate for a few weeks by the pool in Barbados, or whatever it is off duty football players do. Things get even deeper when you realise you have to manage your team so that all of your star players are fit and un-booked for the big games. This starts to get quite complicated, but Premier Manager '98 shines due to this sort of depth.

GOALASSSOOOO!!!

If you're not dead into football, you're probably thinking Premier Manager '98 is a nightmare to play. The truth is, though, it has one of the easiest operating systems we've



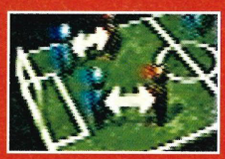


Witness some incredible close-ups on the replays.

PREMIER TACTICS

A manager has many variables at his disposal to prep his team ready for the big match. The Team Tactics screen is one of the most important areas of Premier Manager '98 in that you can tailor your team's technique to suit the opposition perfectly. Here's a layman's break down of the options you have at hand.

DEFENSIVE STYLE



• Man To Man: This technique is one of the most fail-safe defensive techniques, in that each of your defenders mark a striker whenever he's in a dangerous position. You should use the Man To Man method when you're up against a strong attacking team with renowned skilful strikers to try and block them out of the game.



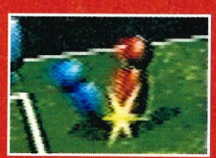
• Zonal: Here your defenders have a set area they must defend. They very rarely move from that area so you must have competent defenders in the first place. This method is best used against teams you know you have a chance against.



• Sweeper: The sweeper system is favoured by continental sides but getting more popular in Blighty. It usually means that you have four or five defenders but one of them will be able to break to midfield and the front to support an attack. It makes for exciting play but it's quite hard to get right on Premier Manager '98.

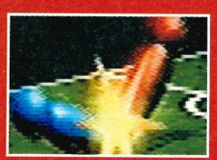
TACKLING STYLE

• Light: You won't get many cards but the pansy-style tackling won't be very productive either.





• Medium: Stick with this and you get quite a few cards, but as long as you have a decent team you win much more of the ball.

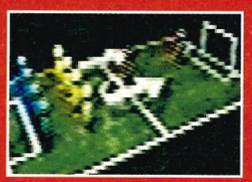


• Hard: You might as well be playing Rugby Manager '98. Aggressive tackling is great for winning the ball but get ready for some fast substitutions when your players get booked.

PASSING STYLE



• Passing Game: To play a passing game you need a strong midfield and defence. This style of play can be worthwhile, but if you're up against a top team it may not be as productive.

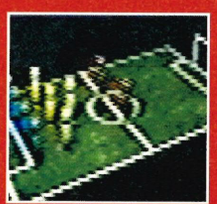


• Counter Attack: This works very well against the high-end clubs in that you can set your game to a defensive style but also break away and attack. The counter attack works well with the sweeper system as long as your team have the pace to break away.



• Long Ball: Early Nineties England favourite and it never really seemed to work. However if it's set up properly with some top class strikers the long ball can be a very useful system to utilise.

OVERALL STYLE



• Defensive: Your team won't push up as much as they could when using the defensive style but if you mix properly with the other options you can create some chances. This style is best used when you're up against a team you have no chance against.



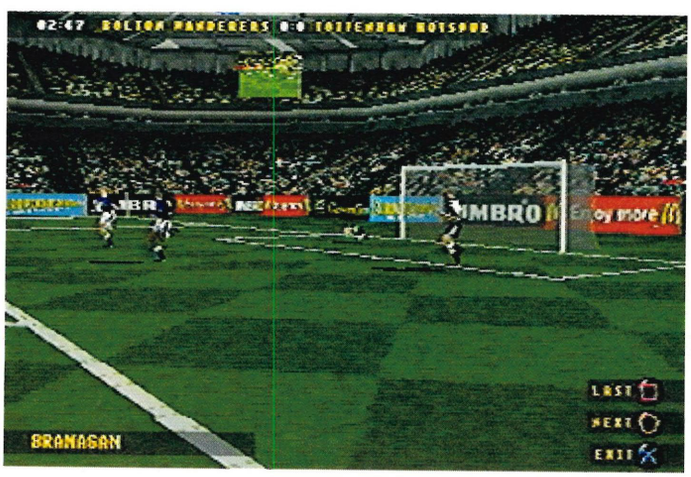
• Orthodox: Bit o' this, bit o' that. Setting your team to orthodox style means that they try and cover all the bases. It sounds the best style, but it won't always work.

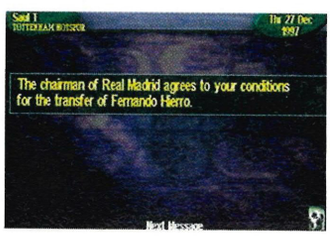


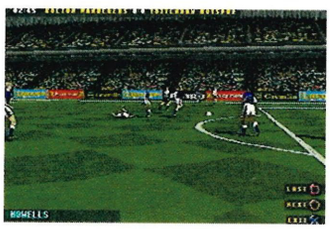
• Attacking: Speaks for itself, really. If you have a strong strike force, stick them all up front and go for it. Just don't try it when you're playing a Third Division team against Man Utd.

seen on any footy management or strategy games in general. We didn't even read the manual and it only took a few minutes to get the gist of what was going on. Everything is laid out in just the right position and the game flows as logically as possible. I was surprised that Premier Manager '98 was this user friendly, because a lot of management games can be a real pig to get into.

So you've set your team up, your tactics are sorted and it's time for the big match. This is where things really start to get going. Instead of using a little diagram with stick men to show you what's happening in the game, Premier Manager '98 uses Actua Soccer 2's graphics engine to show you the highlights of a match. You can choose to get your result immediately, watch what's happening on a text screen and then watch the highlights or just jump straight to the highlights. It's best to watch what's happening on the text screen first, which can be set to just a minute or two in length. You won't find yourself getting bored because the statistics are constantly changing in front of you and you have to make alterations to your squad as the game progresses. Once the game is over and you have the result, go to the view highlights button and after a short load Actua Soccer 2 starts to show you the highlights. Score a goal and you get a mass of replays to show you what's going on from every angle. The highlights aren't just there to give the game a graphical edge either. You can watch how your team plays in certain situations and change your tactics accordingly. The commentary, supplied by the







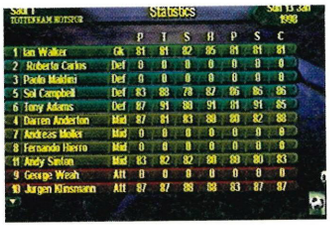
DIB, DIB, DOB, DOB

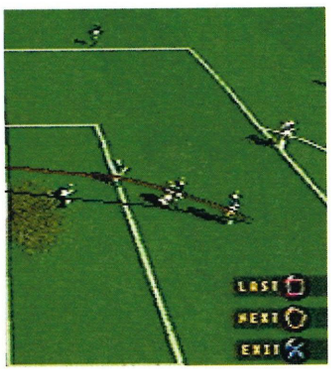


Yes we know it's a poor title for a boxout but it's fitting for a piece about scouts. Not the camping, Duke of Edinburgh-serving, shorts-wearing Boy Scouts, though. We're talking about football scouts. The scouts can watch a certain player you choose, and provide you with more details on how he's playing. You can have up to four scouts watching different players, but only if you have given them enough funding in the club finance section. The scouts are essential if you've got a star player in mind and you don't want to spend the cash until you're sure of what you're buying yourself into.

MULTI MANAGER

Surprisingly, Premier Manager '98 has a multi-player option. Up to four players can take part in the game on a turn-based system. It obviously doesn't provide the type of multi-player malarkey you're used to but if you can find three mates with a lot of patience you can actually get into it. Just make sure you've got a lot of supplies in, because it takes a bloody long time to complete a season.







legendary Barry Davies, is second to none. The commentary on Actua Soccer 2 was fantastic, but because the game is only showing highlights the machine very rarely makes mistakes, because it knows exactly what's going to happen anyway. The only problem I have with this section of the game is that at times you want to pick up the pad and start playing the soccer. Alas, this is a management game so you've got to stick to the bench.

SCORCHIO!!!

On top of your basic team management, Premier Manager '98 also has an exhaustive transfer market. Here you can try to buy players from all the English teams as well as a handful of the top foreign clubs such as AC Milan and Barcelona. It's a great feeling when you pull of the coup of the century by poaching Leonardo from Milan or Rivaldo from Barcelona. If you've got the money, you have over 2700 professional players to barter for but it's not always a straightforward process. Say you wanted to buy Dennis Bergkamp from Arsenal. You put in an offer that you think is reasonable, but the chairman might come back and say Bergkamp isn't for sale at any price. This isn't the end, though, because everybody has a price so you can try again. This time Bergkamp might not agree to your personal terms, so it's back to the drawing board. Things like this really give Premier Manager '98 a human feel, and you really start getting into the high money, high rolling life of the soccer manager.

> "... Premier Manager '98 tries to be as realistic as possible, even down to the ageing of your players..."

Being a manager isn't all sweetness and light, though. At times you have to be a bit of a rogue. Dealing with players' contracts can be a tough business but you find at times you have to transfer players away or even give them away free of charge. Players cost money, you see, and if they're not playing, that ten grand wage is wasted.

I'm gob-smacked by the fact that I like Premier Manager '98. I mean it's hardly Tekken 3 or Gran Turismo. Staring at screens of numbers and footballers' names isn't exactly my idea of a great gaming experience, but somehow, Premier Manager '98 pulls it off. Whether you decide to take on a dwindling Division Three club, or jump straight to the top, Premier Manager '98 holds shed-loads of enjoyment. The graphics aren't great and the sound is only functional, but the gameplay, depth and addictiveness are phenomenal. If you're up for a different type of game, and have even the slightest penchant for football, Premier Manager '98 makes an excellent change from the average everyday soccer game. We're going to see a flood of football games before the World Cup in June, but Premier Manager '98 dares to be different from the other bandwagon jumpers, and in my opinion it deserves to win the cup, or at least come second to Brazil.

EPM
SAUL



Second Opinion

Excellent game! It's been a long time coming, but it's been well worth the wait. Gremlin have made sure that every detail has been covered and that every statistic is correct. Spot on!

Darren

The Score

Publisher	GREMLIN
Developer	IN-HOUSE
Released	OUT NOW
Version	UK
Price	£44.99
Genre	SPORTS MANAGEMENT
Players	1-4
Memory Card	✔

GAMEPLAY
9

ORIGINALITY
8

LIFESPAN
9

SOUND
7

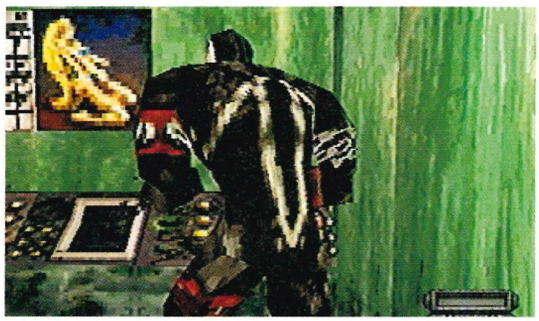
GRAPHICS
7

OVERALL
91%

in summary

Soccer management games have never been this user friendly, polished or engrossing.

Spawn- The Eternal



The movie tie-in; without doubt the genre of game responsible for throwing up the largest proportion of stinkers over the last fifteen years. Software companies still cling to the hope that the kudos of a 'cool' flick will rub off on their silicon interpretation and boost its sales potential accordingly. Unfortunately, they're generally dashed-off clones of existing titles that just bolt the images from a film onto a tried and tested framework, lacking any real drive to be original or innovative. The prime felon here is, unsurprisingly, Street Fighter: The Movie, which ironically started off as a highly respected arcade beat-'em-up before being celluloided and then returned to its abysmal final game form. The trend seems to be changing, though, as Die Hard Trilogy and the impending Fifth Element show, so it's no longer necessary to approach a licensed title with dread.

This brings us to Spawn - The Eternal, a software version of a film of a comic book. Created by Todd McFarlane, the character has a well received and popular series of graphical publications to its name that eventually caught the eye of movie producers, no doubt looking for a new Batman to run into the ground over four instalments.

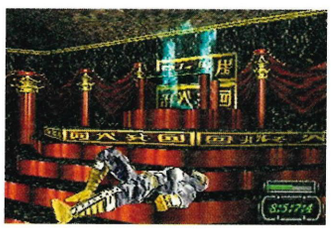
The character's origins lie in the life of Pittsburgh resident Al Simmons, whose overriding drive came from his gifted talent to succeed at anything he put his mind to. His ensuing whizz-kiddery at college brought him to the attention of the CIA, who recruited him as an operative before his graduation. Rapidly rising through the hierarchy of the shady organisation, he was fortunate enough to save the President from certain demise during an attempted assassination, leading to him being offered a job in an extremely covert wing of The Company. His role was to go on especially dodgy missions that were ostensibly for the good of national security, which jarred with Al's personal sensibilities eventually, leading to his boss ordering he be summarily rubbed out by his fellow agents on a subsequent sortie. However, just prior to his demise Simmons made a pact with Hell so that he could return to earth and see his wife. Aaaah. Now though, the powers of the underworld have transformed him into Spawn, one of the Maleboglia's (the Devil's alias) Hell Warrior henchmen. Now he is bound by a pact with evil from which no being has ever escaped, and must save his better half from the attentions of Maleboglia's right-hand-man, The Clown, and avoid using his powers for immoral demonic purposes.

> **"...The main sprite, however, is huge, one of the biggest fully-polygon characters I've seen on the PSX..."**









Mindless Vandalism

Spawn is basically a 3D exploration adventure in the Tomb Raider mould, interspersed with hand-to-hand fighting sequences to spice things up. The graphics possess a similar look to Lara's quests, albeit with just a touch less detail and definition on the scenery, which looks a little flat up close. The main sprite, however, is huge, one of the biggest fully-polygon characters I've seen on the PSX, and is very well constructed and animated, looking realistic in a muscular kind of way as he trots about, albeit a little too sedately for my liking. He can punch or stamp the

SPAWNY GITS

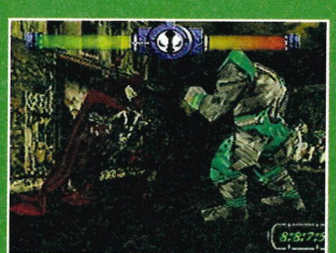
Our devilish hero has to take on a widely varied range of violently-inclined individuals



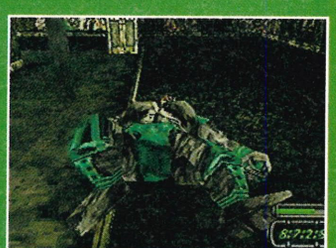
Spawn encounters this common street hoodlum in a scummy underground station. Surprisingly he's a tough prospect, giving as good as he gets. It's also baffling that he doesn't seem at all intimidated by a masked demon from Hell as well. What a hard case.



A silver-suited knight bars the way to the end of the level here, armed with a sword and energy balls he hurls your way. Dodge them though and he's fairly easy meat for your hand/foot pummelling.

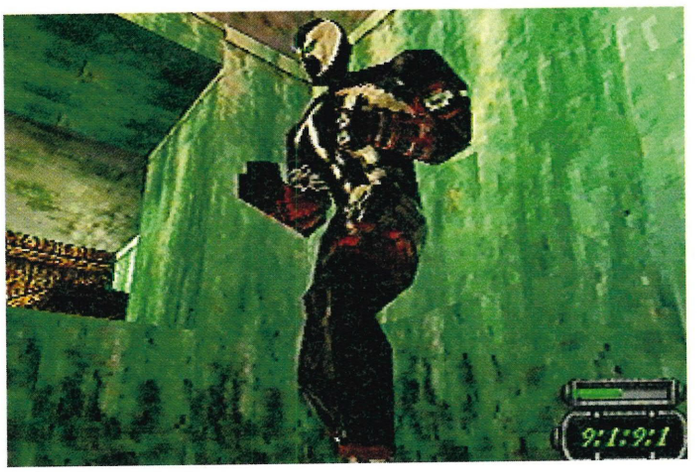


This big turquoise- and grey-armoured hombre looks like a tougher customer, with his enormous bulk and long range firebolt attacks. Caution seems to be the key...



...however, he proves to be a great big wussy wimp, getting kicked to bits through the most rudimentary of cheap and nasty tactics. D'you want some more then, eh? Eh?





objects littering the landscape, including telephone boxes, benches and shop fittings, making them shatter apart with a pleasing smash. However fun this mindless vandalism is, though, it has little bearing on the game, which instead demands you break into every one of the legions of crates some clueless delivery boy seems to have left scattered everywhere. Inside are keys that open doors (no prizes there) and various mystic objects that either replenish energy, render you invisible or in the case of the Hell Gauntlet, Pyro- and Cryo-mantic Orbs, do something I've yet to fathom. Still, its a pretty straightforward affair anyway as you jog and leap about dilapidated alleyways, subway tunnels and tatty buildings that are nicely light-sourced and grubbily textured (best of which is the genuine looking graffiti daubings on most walls), under an eerily-pulsing yellowed sky.

Every so often Spawn encounters someone determined to kick his mask in, causing the game to flick into side-on beat-'em-up mode and his strangely-powered cape to pop out and swirl about him. At first these enemies are common street thugs and gangsters, but as you go deeper you come up against more exotic bad guys who have various powers (see panel).

Puny Hero

Intriguingly, though, these flash fighters are easier to defeat than the more mundane ones, who repeatedly managed to kick me into next Tuesday. In fact, Spawn seems to be one of the puniest superheroes around, in spite of all his alleged diabolic powers, as the common toughs have as much energy as him, are just as fast and do just as much damage with their attacks. This is compounded by his inability to sneak past or avoid an enemy when his health is low - you almost always have to fight as the fisticuffs sequence clicks in automatically, even if the prospective opponent is on the other side of a huge room.

The fights themselves are strictly kick/punch/duck affairs that are fairly unsatisfying due to their half-hearted nature. It would have been better to leave out the change-of-perspective feature altogether, or make the fighting either more or less arcadey, not the wishy-washy middle-of-the-road effort here. The exploration section of Spawn is also a little dry, as objects are always in exactly the same place, and most of the locations are basically bare apart from the aforementioned crates. The conundra you're faced with aren't of the spatial/logic-based nature of, say, Tomb Raider or the lateral connections of Resident Evil 2, they're just a case of hunting about until you find the right object that unlocks whatever is blocking the way forward. Other hazards involve easily-avoided falling beams in the subway and the oozing flows of slippery green slime that festoon the sewer, although these aren't dangerous, more of a nicely-animated, distracting inconvenience.

> "...Intriguingly, though, the flash fighters are easier to defeat than the more mundane ones, who repeatedly managed to kick me into next Tuesday..."

Lacks Tang

All in all, Spawn could be accurately summed up as a nicely-animated distraction and not much more. The visuals are laudable and the sonics bear some interesting squelchy spot FX, but overall the game lacks tang, the overriding sensations produced being on the whole a bit of an over-familiar, seen-it-all-before feeling of blandishment.

Yet again the curse of the movie-affiliation has struck, but to be fair it's not the fault of the licensing source or the underlying programming effort that has gone into its production. It simply has just set its sights a bit too low, letting itself down by lacking solidity at the base of its playing structure, lacking the tasty morsels of playing nutrition that make a title worthy of genuine affection and long-term commitment. EPM

CHRISTIAN



▲ You heard! No damn cows allowed!



Second Opinion

I'd rather listen to a physicist talking politics than sit through another minute of Spawn. It's dead boring you see.

Darren

The Score

Publisher	SCEE
Developer	SONY INT. US
Released	OUT NOW
Version	UK
Price	£39.99
Genre	3D ACTION/ ADVENTURE
Players	1
Memory Card	✓

GAMEPLAY
6

ORIGINALITY
4

LIFESPAN
6

SOUND
7

GRAPHICS
9

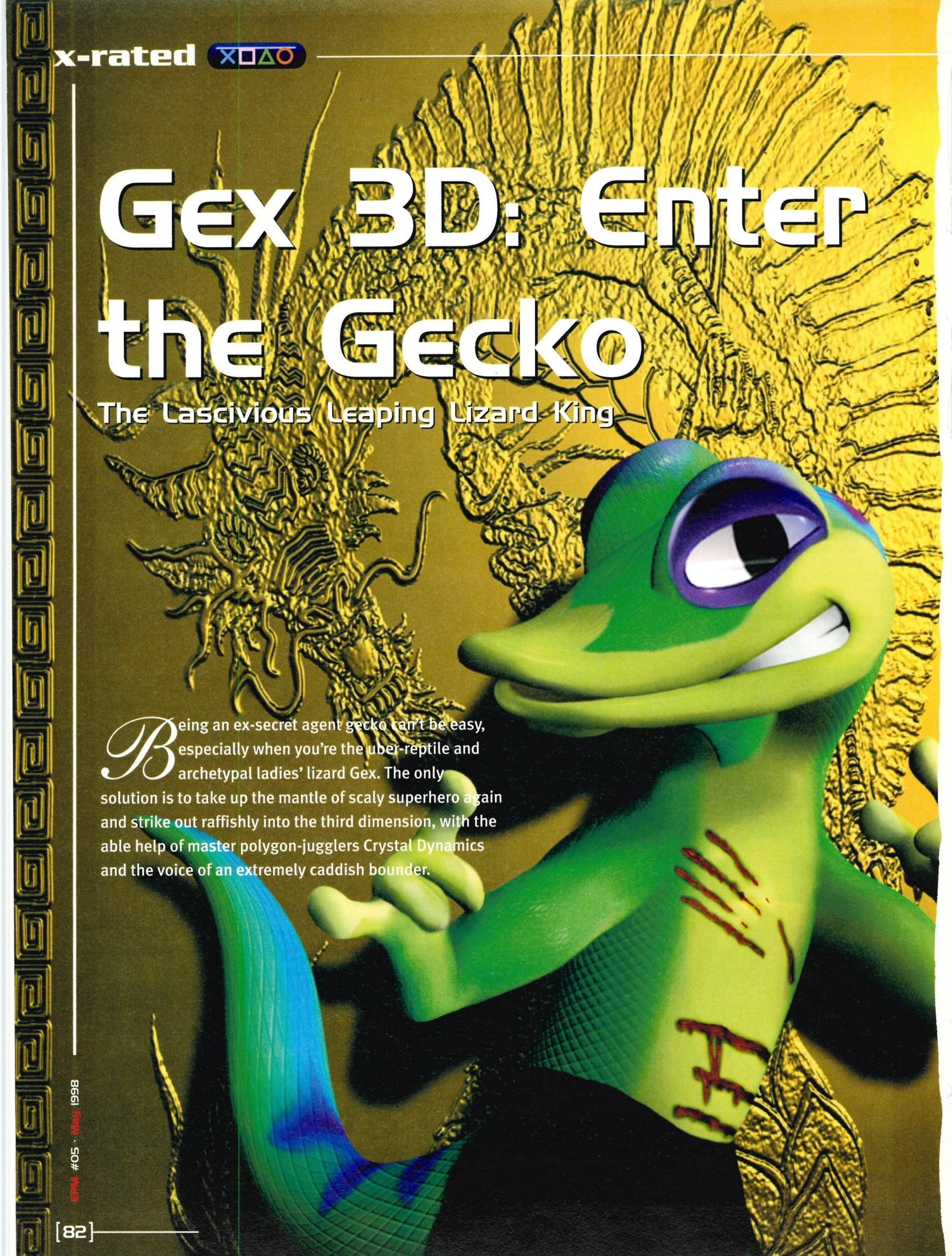
OVERALL
59%

in summary

Read the comic, watch the film, listen to the soundtrack, shun the game.

Gex 3D: Enter the Gecko

The Lascivious Leaping Lizard King



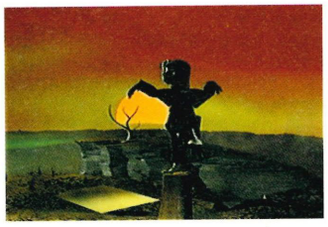
Being an ex-secret agent gecko can't be easy, especially when you're the uber-reptile and archetypal ladies' lizard Gex. The only solution is to take up the mantle of scaly superhero again and strike out raffishly into the third dimension, with the able help of master polygon-jugglers Crystal Dynamics and the voice of an extremely caddish bounder.

After spending a couple of years in a post-retirement limbo dominated by endless daytime television and junk food, Gex is back. A shadowy Government agency has recruited him (with the help of some serious financial lubricant) to hunt down the dastardly Rez, Gex's arch-nemesis, and return him forthwith from his hideout in the Media Dimension, a strange nether world that exists between TV channels. Armed with only his lasso-like tongue and deadly tail-whip, he must track the villain through 30 levels of cathode-ray inspired madness collecting remote controls that grant him entry to secret bonus rooms and defeating the various unusual bosses who bar his progress, all the while delivering the driest of one-liners.

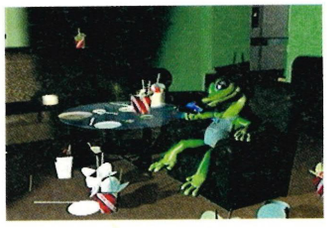
Unlike Rascal (reviewed elsewhere this issue), Gex is not aimed exclusively at young 'uns, although on paper it's a very similar game in concept, being mainly exploration and platform based and with a cute lead character. Unlike the former title, though, the gameplay hasn't been dumbed down, the obstacles and hazards it presents being less fiddly to execute but far more three dimensional and fiendish to overcome. However, to balance this, Gex is extremely manoeuvrable, possessing a variety of abilities that propel him about the landscape with style. For example, in addition to basic jumps and ducking he has a natty karate-style leap that propels him further forward and delivers a mean kick to the jaw of anything or anyone on the other end, and if Gex should fall just short of a ledge, his tongue lashes out and catches on to it, hauling him up to safety.

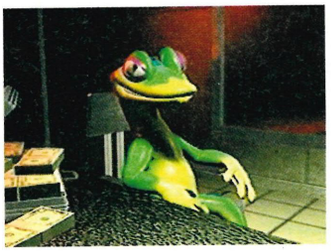
Certain walls can be climbed in true sticky-footed reptile style, while a tap of the Square button swiftly spins him through 360 degrees, his tail scything behind him like a whirlwind, an attribute he can use to attack bad guys, break down walls and smash open the numerous bonus TVs which dot the levels. Hidden inside these idiot boxes are power-ups that help dispatch enemies, such as the Fire Invincibility icon that makes Gex immune to damage and allows him to utilise the Wall O' Flame attack, creating a circle of fire around the unfortunate target. The Ice Cube Maker similarly turns them into an erstwhile igloo, ready to be smashed to smithereens by Gex's trusty tail. Some sets contain flies that he can gobble up for extra health or lives, and they can also act as an insectoid shield when your energy is full.

At the outset our cold-blooded hero has five lives with four hits each (represented as paws at the top of the screen), lost on contact with a meanie. Long falls don't cause damage, just a cartoonish splat! style landing, unless of course he drops into a bottomless abyss of some kind. To help avoid this there's a highly useful camera rotate and zoom facility that lets the third person view be positioned exactly for those tricky leaps. The default viewpoint can be set to either fixed for beginners, semi-automatic or manual, which allows total control at all times, but can make things a mite confusing during action-packed moments.



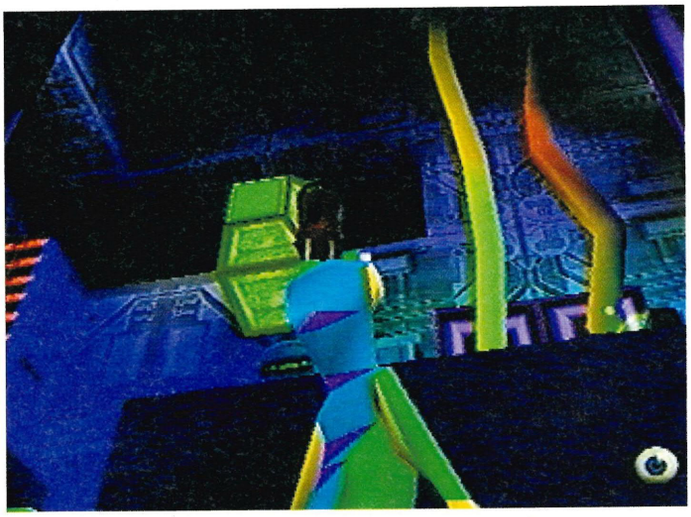






"...Gex is extremely manoeuvrable, possessing a variety of abilities that propel him about the landscape with style..."

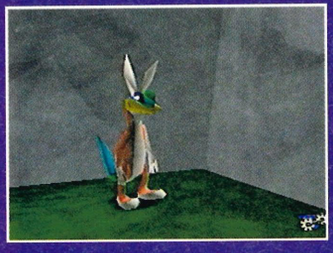




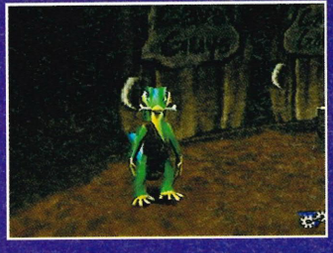
▲ Gex chexs out the surroundings in the colourific circuits level.

▼ CHAMELEON OR GECKO?

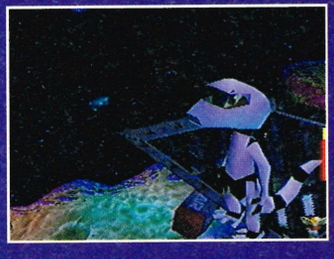
Gex can transform his appearance depending on the situation with his trademark panache .



Nnnyyaahh... What's up Doc? is litiginously the cry on the cartoon level after Gexy falls down a convenient Wabbit Hole. Instead of a bushy bunny tail, though, he's stuck with his reptilian original, so he'd best pull it off (as it grows back anyway).



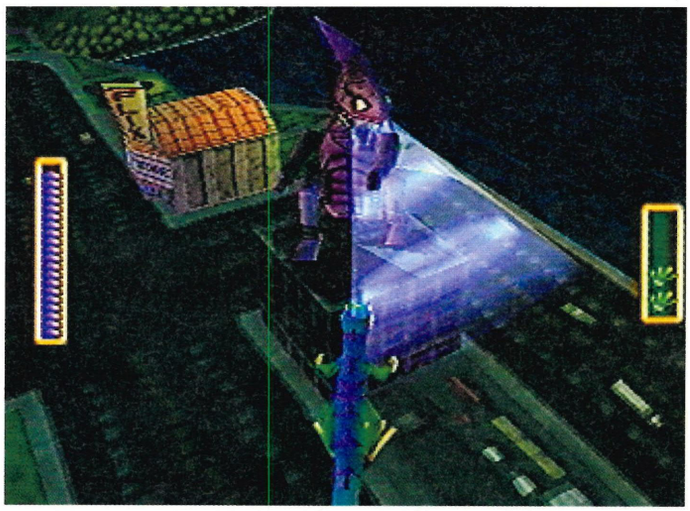
A Prehistoric-era gecko has to blend in with the crowd, even if it means getting one of those fashion-victim piercings. Now Gex has a bone to pick instead of bogies when he's bored (which isn't very often, to tell the truth).



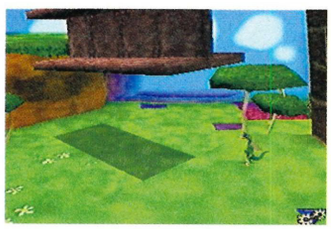
There's one, set for stun! Taking his cue from Luke and Han, Gex dons the armoured garb of an Imperial Stormtrooper for the sci-fi section. Leave him alone for long enough and he draws a light saber and swooshes it about. Don't tell George...



To take on the might of MechaRez our hero becomes Gexzilla, a towering titan of a reptilian destruction dealer. He can now leap atop skyscrapers or ever better smash them down with his tail when his enemy is standing on one. No Godzuky, thank God.



MechaRez gives Gexzilla some serious techno bad breath.

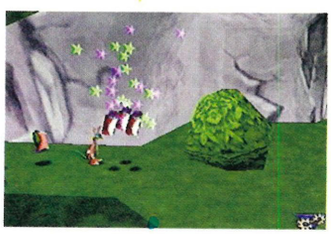


"...Wildly differing graphical styles are also evident from level to level, ranging from the muted sepia tones of the kung-fu section to the pseudo-psychedelic colour-shifting in the microchip-based circuits level..."

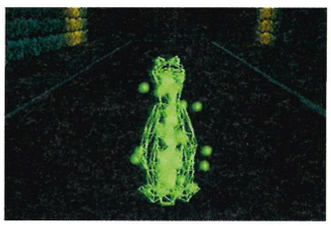
Satan's Rainbow

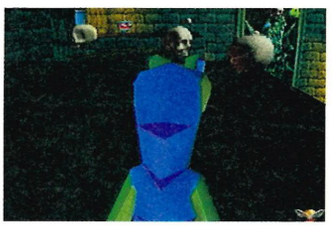
The various levels Gex must negotiate are all based around familiar television and movie influences and bravely sail near the edge of infringing any number of heavyweight copyrights, but it's all the more admirable and enjoyable, of course for this daredevil element. One of the first two available levels is a parody of Warner Bros-style cartoons, in particular Bugs Bunny. The landscape is a green and pleasant land dotted with mallet-wielding flowers and anvils falling from a great height. An Elmer Fudd clone hangs around near the 'Wabbit Season' sign, firing enormous slow-moving shotgun shells at Gex, while wibbly-wobbly trees, massive tilting I-beams and gaily coloured rainbows provide handy jumping platforms.

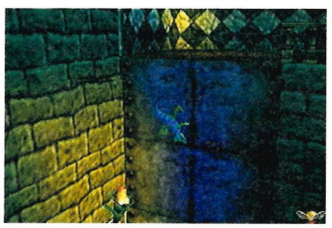
The other default level is a haunted house that isn't too dangerous, but has bags of spooky ambience and grim tidings. A lurching Frankenstein is easy meat to the green guy's swishing hindquarters, his limbs dropping off one by one in a pleasing Monty Python and the Holy Grail style, while a grinning knife-wielding maniac (possibly a French World Cup fan?) loses his head when struck, but the body just keeps on hacking as his bonce looks on. The atmosphere is nice and gloomy, the air cut shrilly by intermittent screams and wails, while only the pools of dim light provide any haven from the creepy marauding spectres that float about. Every different area has its own very distinct personality evident in everything down to the most minute details. Droll signposts are scattered about in tucked-away places ('No Haunting before 10pm!', 'Keep off the grass, man'), while each environment has its own outfit for Gex (see boxout) plus a specific









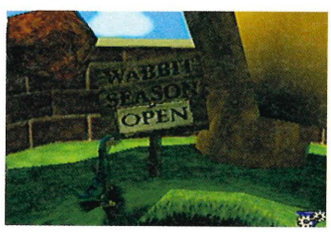


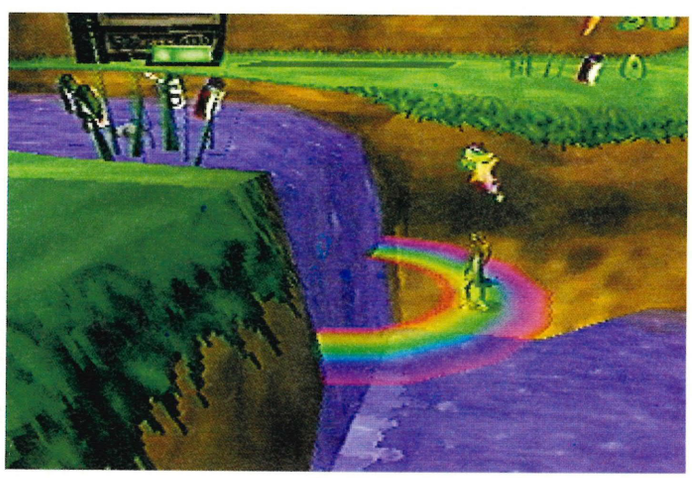
animation if you leave him alone long enough. For example, on the horror stage he picks at some earwax with his tail and then rotates his head through a full turn, while in the kung-fu movie setting if left idle he adopts the crane position, then drops into an authentic martial arts stance. The best character-enhancing feature, though, is the numerous one-liners he spouts at opportune moments (again, see boxout). These serve to give Gex a loveable personality that's lacking in a join-the-dots individual like Rascal. You feel a genuine affection for him, not just because of the fine gameplay and his nifty abilities, but because he has been given an actual sense of humour and dry wit that goes beyond the confines of the game.

Superb Package

While lacking the impressive (but ultimately hollow) look-at-me ray-tracing effects of Rascal, as a package the graphics of Gex are uniformly superb. The main character has so many frames of animation it's a pleasure just watching him lope along the landscape. He has obviously had as much care and effort put into making him move in all manner of ways as a 'real' cartoon character, each twitch of his limbs crafted professionally and lovingly. You grin when he clambers up a wall for the first time, his little legs a-twitching, and marvel at the definition of his skin, which, even when viewed up close, doesn't have any of its constituent polygons visible.

Superlative visual tricks also profuse throughout the rest of the game, ranging from the excellent water displacement effect as Gex wades through a pond to the realistic-looking flames licking over his scales when using the fire power-up. Wildly differing graphical styles are also evident from level to level, ranging from the muted sepia tones of the kung-fu section to the pseudo-psychedelic colour-shifting in the microchip-based circuits level. This variety makes each part a distinctly different gaming experience to the previous one, and this is accentuated by the varying challenges and playing 'flavours' presented in each . Some levels are open and full of roaming baddies, while others are more platformy, with the emphasis on finding the right route rather than fighting off hordes of hostile whatevers. Even the level names themselves are demonstrative of the overall irreverent attitude at work; 'The Umpire Strikes Out', 'Samurai Night Fever', 'No Weddings and a Funeral', 'Pain in the Asteroids'. No surprises,





RAKE'S PROGRESS

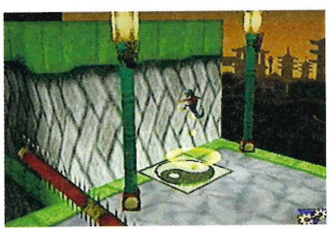
Gex's voice has been provided by that Castrol-voiced rogue Leslie Phillips, who has recorded over 500 one-liners that pop up throughout the game with rib-tickling regularity. The actor's voice has been lip-synched to the polygon geckos, with Gex's mouth containing 12 'bones' (with five in his tongue alone; oo-er) allowing him to form all the phonemes of speech accurately. This high-technology and ingenuity has been utilised so he can say lines like this:
"Tongue-tastic!"
"Ah! To see the world as Keith Richards does!"
"I feel like I'm in Boy George's pants!"
"How did I get in Bill Gates' head?"





then, that the FMV is side-splitting, with even a gratuitous fart joke thrown in for good measure, and the overall presentation shows a wholly unnecessary level of care and attention, down to the main menu screen and options being part of a rapidly-whirling miniature 3D amalgamation of all the levels at once.

The audio hasn't been left to the last minute either, quite apart from Gex's own voice . The music changes for each level, being a twanging Bond theme homage on the spy levels and an animated Saturday morning-style joy in cartoon world, replete with those indescribable clangs and thunks that must be direct samples from a cartoon. The Oriental/martial arts scenes are accompanied by tinkling chimes and bombastic action-packed flourishes, while the 'inside



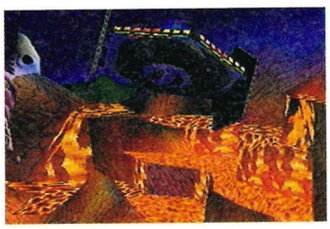
"...It's safe to say that Gex 3D: Enter the Gecko is the best platform and exploration game yet available on the PSX..."

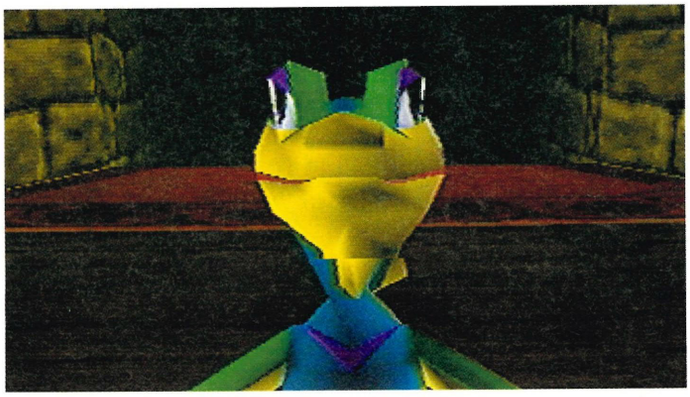
a computer' landscape has techno rhythms banging away, unsurprisingly. Spot FX are chunky and agreeable, being organic pings, wooshes and boings that mark Gex's actions. The fine sheen on the presentation even goes as far as the between-screen loading times which are virtually non-existent, giving things a definite cartridge game edge and bringing it ever closer to being a Super Mario for the PlayStation, an ambition one feels just possibly could lie at the heart of this title.

Watch it, Fat Boy

It's safe to say that Gex 3D: Enter the Gecko is the best platform and exploration game yet available on the PSX, if not actually rivalling the N64's ubiquitous fat plumber for the overall crown. The technical virtuosity is flawless, with barely a hint of tearing or clipping in the vectors, while the creativity shown in both the game design and overall feel is outstanding. It seems the concentration is not so much on challenging the player to complete difficult tasks to continue, making things instead revolve much more around revealing the game rather then denying it. This unusual and generous attitude is made possible through the sheer scale of Gex, whilst the congruent number of ideas and features serve to keep interest levels constantly high. Overall it gives the impression that it was definitely not a rushed job, which unfortunately seems to be an increasingly rare quality nowadays in the high-cash high-pressure software universe. EPM

CHRISTIAN





Second Opinion

Great to see changes in the PAL version to suit the UK punter. Leslie Phillips has some wicked one-liners. Beats the original hands down.

Darren

The Score

Publisher	BMG
Developer	CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
Released	APRIL
Version	UK
Price	£39.99
Genre	3D PLATFORMER
Players	1
Memory Card	✓
Analog	✓
Passwords	✓

GAMEPLAY **9**

ORIGINALITY **7**

LIFESPAN **8**

SOUND **9**

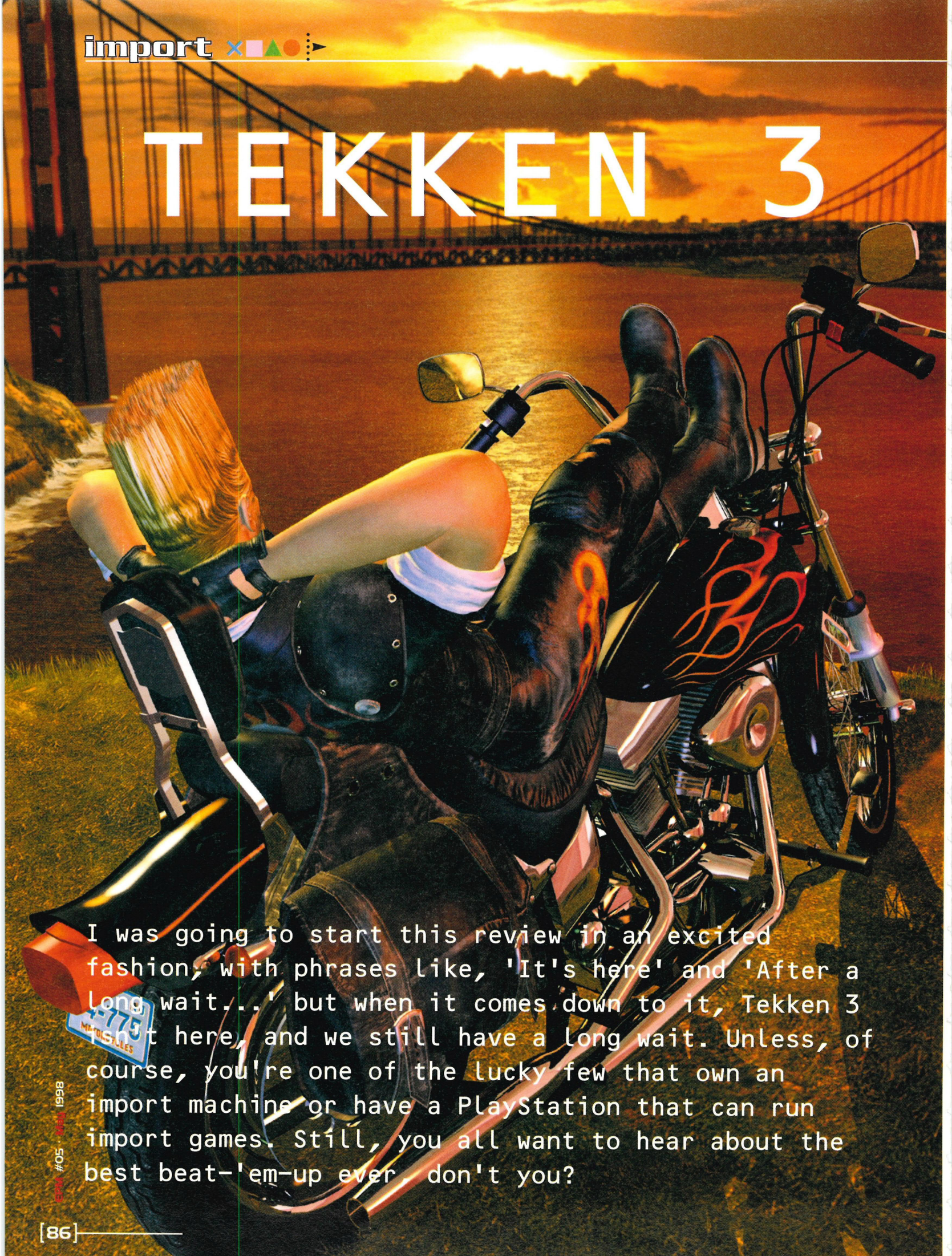
GRAPHICS **10**

OVERALL **93%**

in summary

A dry wit, a clever and inventive tongue. What more could you ask for?

TEKKEN 3



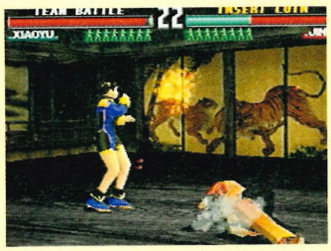
I was going to start this review in an excited fashion, with phrases like, 'It's here' and 'After a long wait...' but when it comes down to it, Tekken 3 isn't here, and we still have a long wait. Unless, of course, you're one of the lucky few that own an import machine or have a PlayStation that can run import games. Still, you all want to hear about the best beat-'em-up ever, don't you?

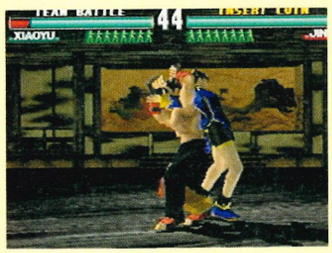
As any discerning PlayStation gamer knows, Tekken 2 is the definitive console beat-'em-up. Okay, since its release we've had Soul Blade, but when it comes down to it, Tekken 2 is the most favoured beat-'em-up on the PlayStation, which is why Tekken 3 is so highly anticipated. Before seeing and playing Tekken 3 we were wondering what the hell Namco could possibly do to improve on Tekken 2, but it didn't take us long to realise Tekken 3 out-does its prequel in literally every department.

The most obvious and striking improvement over Tekken 2 is on the visual side of things. Tekken 3 utilises far more polygons than its predecessor, which makes the characters look more realistic. Rather than having straight and square limbs, with just a few visible moving joints, we get some of the most realistic and beautiful-looking beat-'em-up characters ever seen. Unlike Tekken 2, you can't see the polygon joins and every character has natural-looking limb and body movement. This helps in taking the player 'there', in that the characters look more human than ever before.

The arenas have also been improved graphically. Each one has its own unique feel and plenty of depth. There are around ten different locations, although unlike Cardinal Syn (also reviewed this issue), fighting style or tactics do not alter for different arenas. One good thing which is kept in place from the previous Tekkens is there's no 'ring out' system, so you can't be beaten by some spawny git who just nudges you over the side of the ring.

The improvement on the look of the characters and arenas is quite some feat, seeing that Tekken 3 is also much faster and smoother than Tekken 2. The game plays at an incredible speed compared to any other PlayStation fighter, which makes the action much more frantic and competitive, especially in two-player mode. The speed of the combat is set at just the right pace; any faster and Tekken 3 would just become another button-bashing beat'-em-up. As it stands, the mix of finger gymnastics and cunning needed to cut it on Tekken 3 is perfect for this type of game.









▲ These boots were made for walking...

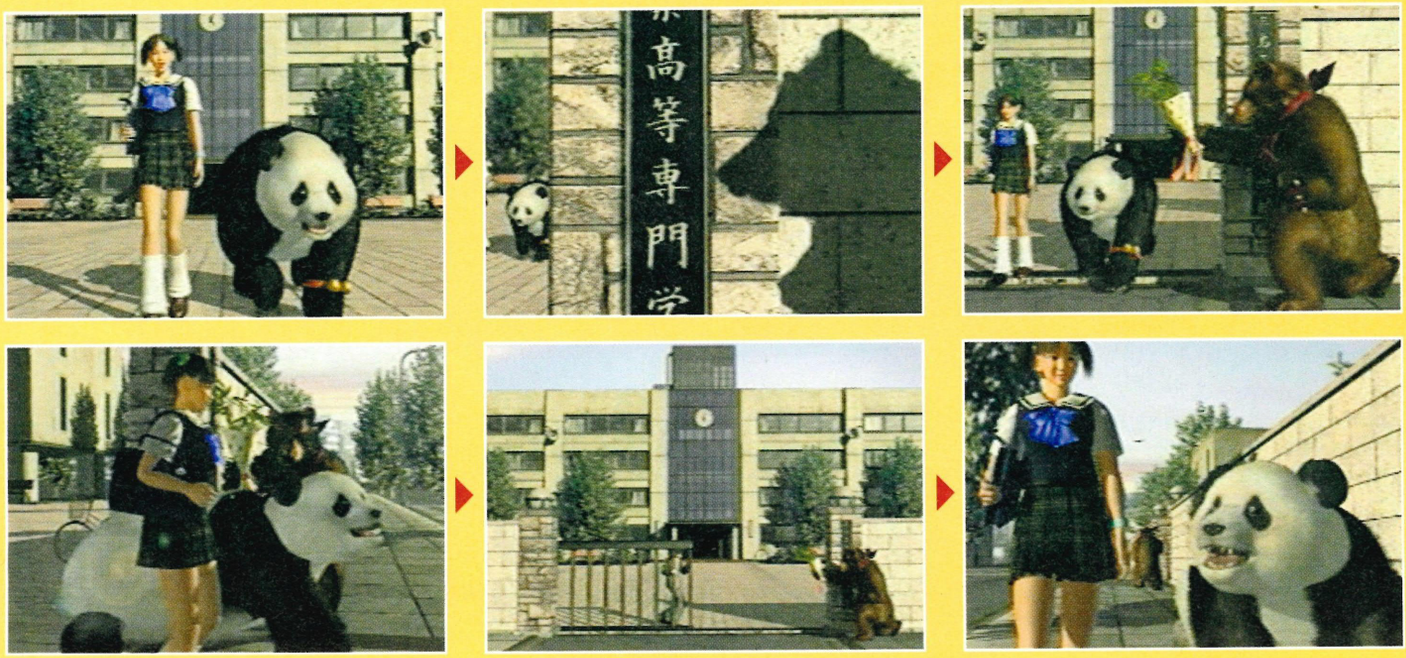
Response Time

If there was one real problem with Tekken 2 it was at times the game wasn't responsive enough. Sometimes the reaction to a button press would take just that little too long, which would make it seem a little sluggish and unresponsive. Well, predictably, Namco have tackled this problem and made Tekken 3 extraordinarily responsive. Every button press and joypad movement is met with a fast reaction by your character, so there's no more cries of 'I blocked that!' or 'My joypad's buggered!'. The extraordinary fast response to joypad input, and the actual speed of the combat makes Tekken 3 the most frantic and hard-fought beat-'em-up we've played in the home or arcade. Just think - if Namco do a proper PAL conversion, Tekken 3 could become even faster than the Jap version we're playing.

In a bid to alter the Tekken style of gameplay, Namco have added a full side-step allowing you to step away from your opponent's attacks. This makes the game as close to true 3D as a Tekken game has ever been, although you won't find yourself fighting while facing

▼ CUTSEY ENDING

Altogther now... Aaaahhhh. Kuma gives Panda a bunch of flowers and gets blown out. Gutted.



or with your back to the screen. You can adapt your fighting system to incorporate the side-step, although I wouldn't say that this is essential; just a good option if you want to take it.

Apart from the side-step, improved response time and speed, the actual style of combat hasn't really changed a great deal. The moves are much, much smoother, but this is just part of the overall improvements Namco have



achieved with Tekken 3.

Tekken 3 still has a perfect blend of combo, specials and general moves that are incredibly easy to get into, but challenging to master. The learning curve is set with the newcomer to Tekken in mind, so the first part of the game's going to be too easy for anybody who's played more than a few hours of Tekken 2. Things become tougher as the game progresses, but I encountered a few problems with the difficulty level. When playing against the computer, the difficulty seems a little inconsistent. For instance, you have to complete ten stages to beat the one-player arcade mode. I'm no beat-'em-up pro, but I had the ten stages whipped within an hour of starting Tekken 3. This was on Medium setting with two rounds of 60 seconds each, so I wasn't using the old, short one-round technique. Okay, so I used a few continues, but should it really be this easy to complete the arcade mode? Well no, because during consequent plays I found that Tekken 3 is in no way easy. In fact, the one-player game is bloody frustrating. You seem to be able to get to Stage Seven without too much hassle, but once there, the difficulty level rockets skywards. After smashing your pad to pieces for a couple of hours you may just luck your way through, and then find it's a breeze to get to the end and beat the game. Surely a beat'-em-up should have a progressive difficulty level rather than an erratic and subsequently frustrating system? And as for playing on the hard mode...

Two-Player Heaven

Still, none of these difficulty level problems come into play when it's just you, a mate and a hell of a lot of time on your hands. As good as the



one player-arcade mode is, Tekken 3, and in fact any beat'-em-up, is best played against a human opponent. Tekken 3 really comes into it's own in the two-player game and two equally-skilled players soon find themselves battling away into the early hours of the morning. You'd better make sure you're in a soundproofed room, though, because the neighbours are going to have some complaints about the constant shouting and hammering

KING OF THE IRON FIST–

You've probably read last month's Gamespotting feature on Tekken 3 and the characters in the game. Well, since getting the import version we've managed



KUMA/PANDA

Nationality none
Fighting style Combination of animal and Heihachi's style
Age 20
Height 280cm
Weight 210kg
Occupation Heihachi's bodyguard
Comments Both Kuma and Panda use exactly the same heavy-handed fighting style
Stage Marshall's Hilltop Dojo



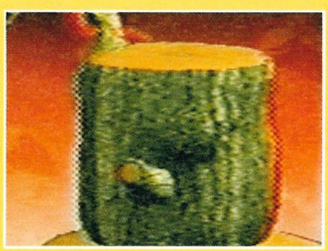
FOREST LAW

Nationality USA
Fighting style Chinese Martial Arts
Age 25
Height 177cm
Weight 66kg
Occupation 2nd master of Marshall's dojo
Comments One of the fastest and hardest characters available. A definite safe bet
Stage Marshall's Hilltop Dojo



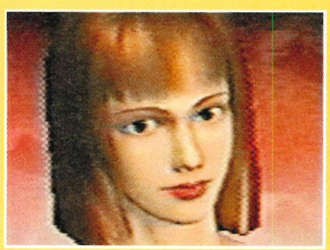
LEI WULONG

Nationality China
Fighting style various martial arts
Age 45
Height 175cm
Weight 65kg
Occupation Copper
Comments Lei can perform a number of different stances making it harder for your Opponent to predict attack patterns.
Stage Quiet street



MOKUJIN

Nationality Tree-Land
Fighting style Changes between other characters fighting style every round
Age You'd have to chop him in half to count the rings
Height 178cm
Weight 95kg
Occupation Training dummy
Comments A bit of a wooden personality (Boom, Boom!)
Stage Serene Forest



ANNA WILLIAMS

Nationality Ireland
Fighting style Assassinating martial arts based on Aikido
Age 22
Height 161cm
Weight 49kg
Occupation Assassinating Kazama
Comments Quick and tough
Stage Laboratory courtyard



PAUL PHOENIX

Nationality USA
Fighting style Combined marshal arts, based on Judo
Age 46
Height 187cm
Weight 81kg
Occupation None
Comments Nice beard!
Stage Punk Alley



LING XIAOYU

Nationality China
Fighting style Based on Bagua fist
Age 16
Height 157cm
Weight 42kg
Occupation School/looking after Panda
Comment Hmm, Chinese schoolgirl
Stage Namco's Wonder Egg



YOSHIMITSU

Nationality none
Fighting style Manji, Ninja arts
Age unknown
Height 178cm
Weight 63kg
Occupation Leader of Manji party
Comments Very fast with some cool combos
Stage Serene Forest



▲ Ogre, the boss character, is invincible once you access him.

of joypads against the wall. The office hasn't had such a competitive feel about it since we first got GoldenEye on the N64 with its ace four-player mode. Two-player Tekken definitely matches the all-out competition of GoldenEye, and it's a damn site more skilful to become the office champ too.

Tekken 3 offers more than just an Arcade mode and two-player match-up, though. Team Battle allows you to choose a team of up to eight combatants to slog it out in turn with another team of similar size. This mode is cool for party play as a group of people can just take one character in turn for a real sense of camaraderie. Time Attack mode simply pits you against the clock in a bid to complete bouts in the best time, and Survival mode does what it says on the can; survive as long as possible with only one health bar. There's also a practice option that helps you time your combos to perfection - something which is most definitely needed. To help you out here, each button press plays a different musical note; it sounds hard to get used to, and to be honest it is. But those combos do need to be practised, big time. The final and most innovative mode is the Tekken Force mode which takes the form of a multi-foe, scrolling beat-'em-up. Check out the boxout for more details. Of course, when it



THE CONTENDERS

to dig deeper and find out much more about the Tekken 3 contestants...



BRYAN FURY

Nationality: USA
Fighting style: Kickboxing
Age: 29
Height: 186cm
Weight: 80kg
Occupation: Member of International Police Force (before he died)
Comments: Pretty damn rock, great kicking style, definite beginners' favourite
Stage: Punk Alley



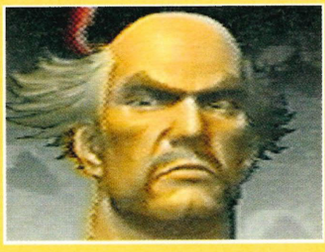
EDDY GORDO

Nationality: Brazil
Fighting style: Capoeira
Age: 27
Height: 188cm
Weight: 75kg
Occupation: None (could be a star break dancer, though)
Comments: Ridiculous break-dancing combos make him a must for people who can't be bothered to play properly
Stage: Mountain Temple



GUN JACK

Nationality: Unknown
Fighting style: Power; prototype guns are installed on both arms
Age: 7
Height: 220cm
Weight: 170kg
Occupation: Killing machine
Comments: His strength is an advantage, although lack of speed lets him down
Stage: Laboratory Courtyard



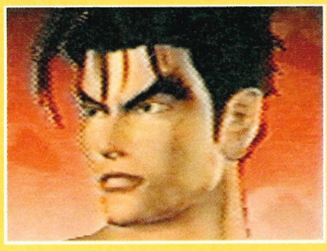
HEIHACHI MISHIMA

Nationality: Japanese
Fighting style: Mishima Fighting karate
Age: 73
Height: 179cm
Weight: 80kg
Occupation: Runs Mishima Financial Empire
Comments: Rock; 'nuff said
Stage: Temple Entry Room



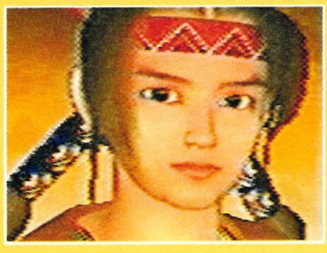
HWOARANG

Nationality: Korea
Fighting style: Taekwondo
Age: 19
Height: 181cm
Weight: 68kg
Occupation: Street gang boss
Comments: Quick and talented with some good specials
Stage: Mountain Dojo



JIN KAZAMA

Nationality: Japan
Fighting style: Mishima karate and Kazama style self defence
Age: 19
Height: 180cm
Weight: 75kg
Occupation: Martial Artist
Comments: Very quick and nimble fighting style
Stage: Tiger Dojo



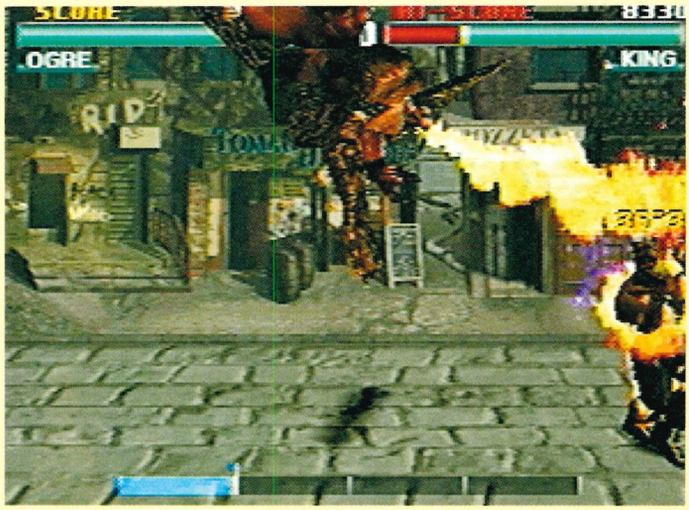
JULIA CHANG

Nationality: USA
Fighting style: Chinese Kempo
Age: 18
Height: 165cm
Weight: 54kg
Occupation: Archaeology
Comments: Tasty bird, like
Stage: Temple Entry Room



KING

Nationality: Mexico
Fighting style: Wrestling
Age: 28
Height: 200cm
Weight: 90kg
Occupation: Pro wrestler/ manages an orphanage
Comments: If you can get in close, King has a massive range of devastating restling moves
Stage: Sky-borne wrestling ring



▲ Ogre II proves even tougher than the first ogre.



▲ Oh, give us a hug. I luv you...

comes down to it, the two-player mode cannot be beaten, though.

It's often 'make or break' time on the strength of a fighting game's character line-up, and as most of you already know, the Tekken series has very strong characters indeed. There's plenty of favourites from the two previous games, but also a few new entrants in the Tekken tournament this time around. You start the game with the choice of ten characters, of which four are brand-new and six are either the same as Tekken 2 or relatives of the Tekken 2 fighters. However, by playing through the game you can gain access to up to 12 new fighters, bosses and sub-bosses. Characters such as Ogre, Heihachi and Kuma are all on hand, but you have to work for them. Once you have all these saved to a memory card, the two-player games become much more exciting due to the amount of characters available to play. All of the Tekken favourites are here, but not always in their old forms. Most of them have something different about them, and you have to learn extra moves and combos, even if you were an expert at Tekken 2. The characters have enough old and new to keep everyone happy, and we'd even go as far as to say that Tekken 3 has the best beat-'em-up character line-up we've seen. So there.



Perfect Presentation

Although we were playing a Japanese copy of Tekken 3, most of the text was in English so we can tell you the presentation of the game is second to none. There are tons of sound, game and control options for you to toggle in an easy-to-use menu system. So if you're the type to be put off by dodgy Jap import game menus, you won't have any problems with Tekken 3.

The introduction also keeps up to the very high standard of rendered intros gracing other Tekken games. It's an action-packed look at the characters and story behind the game, and although it's not quite as stunning as the Resident Evil 2 intro, it's definitely up there with the best of them. There's also a totally



MOTHER MOKUJIN

The Tree-family kids are having a bash on a wooden Tekken arcade game. Mum doesn't take kindly to this and gives kid Mokujin a kicking.



TEKKEN FORCE MODE

Namco have added a new gameplay feature to try and give Tekken 3 that little something extra, and to an extent it's a worthwhile addition to the game. The Tekken Force mode allows you to choose any character for a full-on scrolling fight fest a la Double Dragon and Streets Of Rage. The action comes thick and fast as you wander through dingy streets, baking deserts and various other areas.

You may have to fight off three or four characters at a time, which is extremely hard to get into. Use of the side step is vital on Tekken Force mode, so you're wise to switch this function to the shoulder buttons on the pad. Every enemy you take out adds time onto the final bout which is always against one of the other main characters from the game. Apart from being bloody tough (without any continues), the Tekken Force mode is great fun to play and a worthy diversion from the main game.







unique and original ending for each character. Each one of the character endings are up to a very high standard of visuals and content. Some of them are in an amusing anecdote style, while others are full on action packed mini-movies. But we don't want to give too much away yet.

Japanese game music comes in for quite a lot of stick in the English games press, and most of the time it's deserved. The Tekken 3 music doesn't deserve to be slated in the same way as most other Japanese music, though. As much as the tunes aren't to my taste, the guitar- and beat-orientated music is actually pretty good, and very fitting to the frantic combat taking place on screen. The sound effects are absolutely perfect. You can almost feel the blows when they ring out of your speakers and some of the Bruce Lee-style war cries are well up to Japanese martial arts movie standards. The range of sound effects add an even more violent atmosphere to what is already one of the most violent games you can play.



Tekken 3 may be a violent game, but Namco have opted not to go for the blood and guts angle as seen on Tenchu and Cardinal Syn. As much as I enjoyed the Cardinal Syn gorefest, I think that Namco have the right idea with Tekken 3 in that the violence is only there in the gameplay, and not as gratuitous graphical touches. This means that Tekken shouldn't have to be officially age rated when it hits these shores, so all and sundry can play it without breaking the law.

Since Tekken 3 arrived in the office, it has officially taken the top spot for the best game to waste office hours on. In fact it's a surprise that this magazine's on time (for all I know it may not be) because we've been caning Tekken 3 for yonks now, which is testament to how good it actually is (we're a callous, critical bunch, you see). The improvements over the already-excellent Tekken 2 are far reaching, although to some they won't be immediately obvious. Tekken 3 is better looking and faster than its predecessor, but the gameplay hasn't suffered one little bit because of this. I'd go as far as to say that in two-player mode it's the best game on the PlayStation, however the one-player Arcade mode lets it down slightly, but only due to the erratic difficulty level. The Tekken Force mode is the proverbial icing on the cake which seals Tekken 3's victory as one of, if not the most popular game this year. If you've got an import or chipped (less said about that the better) machine and a spare seventy quid, stop reading this review now and blaze a trail down to your local import emporium to get a copy. If you can't run import games it's a long wait for the PAL release, but believe me, it'll be worth it.

EPM

SAUL

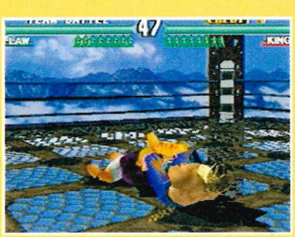
Second Opinion

This game's the mutz nuts. The characters are fresh and exciting, the animation silky smooth and the fighting system second to none. Who said Tekken 3 was an arcade machine too far for the PSX?

Ian

BIG DADDY KING







The Score

Publisher	SONY JAPAN
Developer	NAMCO
Released	OUT NOW (IMPORT)
Version	JAPANESE
Price	£69.99 (MAY VARY)
Genre	BEAT-EM-UP
Players	1-2
Memory Card	✓

GAMEPLAY
10

ORIGINALITY
8

LIFESPAN
9

SOUND
9

GRAPHICS
9

OVERALL
95%

in summary

The King Of Iron Fist Tournament - The King of beat-'em-ups

TENCHU

More blood and guts in the name of swordplay...

What's this fascination with blood and guts? Cardinal Syn, reviewed this month, offers a bucketful of limbs and entrails, and now Tenchu, from Sony Music Entertainment Japan, does exactly the same thing. And why is it me who gets to review the sick games?



The blood and guts is the only thing that links Tenchu to the excellent Cardinal Syn, though. Tenchu relies heavily on the fighting side of things, but it's more Tomb Raider than Tekken in style. The game is viewed by a moving third person camera, situated behind your character's shoulder in a Tomb Raider fashion. The camera moves fluently, and besides some problems when you come close to a wall, you won't lose track of the action.

The game takes place in a number of Japanese locations, where you find yourself exploring woodland, ancient villages, hillside castles and deep underground caverns. All the environments have been drawn to the very highest standard, and each and every location oozes ancient Japanese atmosphere. There are a few graphical glitches but this is kept to a bare minimum. One problem I have with the visual aspect of the game is many of the locations look a little samey, although there is just enough variety to keep you from getting bored.

Being an import Japanese game means that the storyline is beyond us, however the story isn't important when you start playing the game. Before you get into the action you have to choose between the two protagonists. The guy, Rikimaru, is your typical Samurai with a katana for a weapon whilst the bird, Ayame, carries a pair of deadly daggers. Each character has its advantages - I prefer the girl because she's much faster.

After choosing your warrior it's time to select your ninja weapons and devices. Here you get to choose four different items (from a selection of many), ranging from a shuriken to a smoke bomb to a decoy ninja. These weapons and gadgets add a great deal to the game in that you feel all the bases have been covered - you don't just use ninja fighting skills as many of the items allow you to use your cunning and not your strength. As the game progresses you're awarded more items to select at this screen although most of them are limited to a very small number.

Gratuitous Violence

Once the game's underway you find yourself in a quiet Japanese village street. As you start to explore, a frantic girl begins screaming to warn the guards that you're around. Immediately you're thrown into battle with a sword-wielding guard, which is where you first notice the super-smooth combat. You haven't as many moves as a dedicated beat-'em-up, but hitting attack along with different joypad movements produce some pretty astounding results. The first thing you notice about the battle is the amount of blood that spews out of your opponents when you take to them



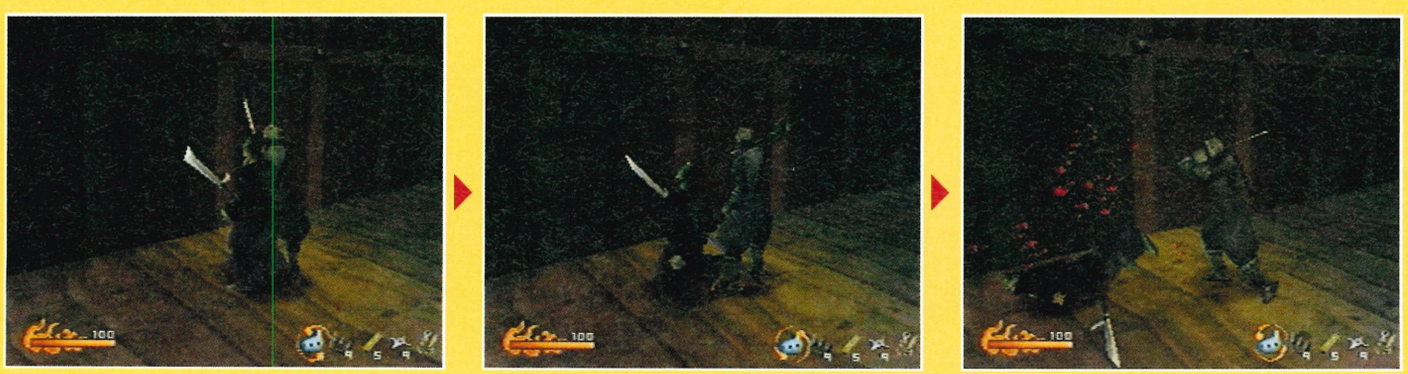
I think I may have blown my cover!

"...the blood on Tenchu seems to be added as an afterthought, making it gratuitous rather than necessary..."



AMBUSH ALLEY

Sneak up behind an opponent and slit his throat in true ninja style.



NINJA CUTS

At the end of level you get a short cut-sequence which means nothing to us because we can't speak Japanese. Once the cut sequence starts, though, get ready because you're just about to enter a battle with a very powerful foe.









with a sharp blade. However, while the blood on Cardinal Syn (also reviewed this month) added to the barbaric feel of the game, the blood on Tenchu seems to be added as an afterthought, making it gratuitous rather than necessary. When one of your opponents karks it, the amount of blood that spurts out is just ridiculous, although some of the death scenes are pretty cool. After your first battles, which are actually pretty tough, you realise there's another way to go about playing Tenchu. Stealth is where the game really comes into its own.

Many of the characters' moves are based around infiltrating an area without being found. Your main help here is the grappling hook. Hit the Triangle button, aim the crosshairs to where you want to go and you're pulled up to this point. This means you can take to the rooftops and sneak around rather than just steam in looking for a punch-up. You can also hide behind walls and look around the corner, ready to jump out onto an unsuspecting target and impale them with your weapon. One of the best parts in the game is standing on a rooftop above one of your foes. Drop down behind them, hit Attack and your character grabs them from behind and slits their throat in one fell swoop. The first time you manage this you get a great sense of satisfaction, as sick as it may sound.

There are plenty of ways to off your foe in Tenchu, and you always find another one when you're least expecting. The ninja gadgets available at the start of the game can also help in keeping your attacks quiet and unseen. You have access to a sleeping potion, smoke bombs and even enemy clothing which allows you to walk up to an enemy and chop them up without them expecting a thing. The best ninja gadget has to be the dummy decoys. Throw one of these out and watch the enemy hack it up, whilst you sneak past them into the next section. The mines come a close second in the ninja gadget coolness stakes, but they are by no means stealthy. Drop one of these and peg it away from the combat and watch your enemy get blown apart. Cool.



Good Jap Soundtrack?

For once a Japanese game has music that's worthy of note. It takes the form of lightweight Japanese pop, folk and atmospherics which don't sound too inspiring. At first you're reaching for the mute button, but as you find yourself sinking deeper into the game you realise the music is perfectly fitting. The realistic chopping, slicing and sword clash sounds all add to the atmosphere to make up one of the best Japanese soundtracks that we've heard (this isn't hard to achieve, though).

"...The realistic chopping, slicing and sword clash sounds all add to the atmosphere to make up one of the best Japanese soundtracks that we've heard..."

Reviewing import games can be a real bind at times (especially if they're Japanese). I couldn't begin to tell you the storyline and I was basically unaware of my goal on any of the eight levels, although this didn't seem to matter as I was enjoying the ninja-based antics anyway. If I did know exactly what to do on each level, I'm sure that the game wouldn't last half as long as it did anyway as eight levels isn't exactly a massive amount. Tenchu does have a lot going for it, though. The visuals are second only to Tomb Raider's more detailed approach, the sound and music is some of the best Japanese stuff we've heard and the gameplay is refreshingly different. If you can live without knowing the storyline or how to use the options, it's worth investing in a copy of Tenchu. If you can't be bothered with the Japanese text or if you simply can't play import games on your machine, don't worry because Tenchu should be getting a full UK PAL conversion later this year.

EPM

SAUL



▲ The Ninja smokescreen is working fine!

Second Opinion

Great game! We've just heard that Activision will be publishing it in the UK very soon. So you won't have to wait an age to get hold of it.

Darren

The Score

Publisher	SONY MUSIC ENT. (JAPAN) INC.
Developer	ACQUIRE
Released	OUT NOW (IMPORT)
Version	JAPANESE
Price	£69.99 (MAY VARY)
Genre	3D ACTION/ ADVENTURE
Players	1
Memory Card	✔
Analog	✔

GAMEPLAY **9**

ORIGINALITY **8**

LIFESPAN **7**

SOUND **8**

GRAPHICS **9**

OVERALL **85%**

in summary

Atmospheric, action-packed ninja epic from the land of the rising sun.

BUSHIDO BLADE 2

Grip your weapon tight and head on down to an LA toilet

The Samurai swordsmanship of Bushido Blade slapped itself onto the shelves of British stores a couple of months ago, bringing a blood-red tinge and an unprecedented fighting format to hardcore beat-'em-uppers. It was a defiant and bold step by SquareSoft to take a worn genre into a new direction, and with major radical changes implemented it could have easily been shot down in flames by the industry. Luckily, and rightly, it wasn't. Instead it received great marks in not only EPM (Issue Two, 90%), but across all the specialist press. A year on from the Japanese release of Bushido Blade, SquareSoft have released the sequel to the people of the rising sun. We've grabbed an import copy to give you a quick run-down on the improvements.

The first progress is graphical. The characters are sharper looking, and the backgrounds are more ameliorate and varied, but unfortunately there's a lot of draw-in when the camera zooms out to accommodate the distance between the characters. In some extreme cases, the distance between each character is just too great, with the far ends of the environment non-existent. This leads to the disappointment that the fighting arenas are not connected like the first; no running from level to level. The reason for this is probably memory constraints; with all the enhancements something had to go.

One of the major complaints about the original was the lack of characters. This has been completely adjusted. Instead of fighting through the other seven characters to complete the game, the storyline revolves around two feuding clans. On entering Story mode (one player), you pick one member from a choice of five from either clan. You then enter various stages inhabited by ninjas, and after successfully slashing a few of these you confront a character from the opposing clan. Kickin' this opponent's ass leads on to the next stage where the process is repeated until all five members of the opposing clan are killed. On your excursion through 'kickassland', you meet up at various points with clan relations; these are obviously prepared to help you in your pursuit. A quick chat in gibberish and you take on the role of the associate for the next battle, win and you're able to access the acquaintance from the Character Select screen when you play again. Complete the one-player Story mode with both clans and beating all the clan members with all your buddies opens up 18 selectable characters in all, a lot more



▲ This isn't fair! M16 against a Broadsword, come on!



"...Instead of fighting through the other seven characters to complete the game, the storyline revolves around two feuding clans..."

▼ FAMILY RELATIONS

The intro sequence depicts the story between the two battling clans. There's plenty of blood-splattering gore, very reminiscent of the very popular Manga Video series, but on saying that, it's not the most inspiring of intros. It's short, muggy and uneventful.



HANDBAGS AT SUNRISE

As there's no 'block' button in BB2, weapon clashing is more frequent than in the original. Arms face-offs are a cool feature, locking your sword forces rapid button pressing to drive your rival to the floor.









rewarding than the poxy eight in the original.

Hi-Yaaa

As with the first, each character must arm his or herself with a weapon, but linking the heavy broadswords with beefy blokes and light sabres with nimble chicks isn't as prominent in the sequel. A character's height and weight is a factor when only one weapon is used. In some of the modes (don't ask me which, I can't read Japanese) a character is allowed to pick two weapons, making balancing both the more important factor. There's also another method of swordsmanship, entitled Iai. Again, things are a bit vague but on my reckoning it's an art of fighting with the emphasis on unsheathing your sword and making one swift death dealing blow in one movement.

The actual control method has changed dramatically as well. It's a lot simpler, with only two attack buttons and no block - blocking is achieved by making sure your weapon gets in the way of your opponent's. The three stance fighting technique is still in use, but this is now a single button (square) procedure instead of the shoulder buttons in the original. Many net reviews have dismissed this change as 'troublesome' and 'clumsy' because you can't change without cycling through them. However, I feel as the animation is smooth and rapid, time wastage is kept to an absolute minimum and combat is uninterrupted. The damage routine has also been revamped. Now when a character is struck on the leg, there's none of that hobbling crap that seemed cool in the original at first but soon became annoying. When slapped on the lower limbs in BB2, your character simply becomes slower; hit in the torso and your offensive speed is drowsy.

> **"...with only two attack buttons and no block - blocking is achieved by making sure your weapon gets in the way of your opponent's..."**



Time To Die

There's plenty more to offer in BB2, but as this is an import review I'll keep it to a minimum. I can't see this hitting the UK for at least another six months, maybe even more, so don't get excited about this review unless you can play import games and have an import stockist nearby. The usual two-player mode, practice, and BB1's link-up first person mode are included, and overall this is an improvement on the original but not the huge leap I was expecting.

EPM

DARREN

SUICIDE IS EASY

Another new option comes in the form of self-murder. Don't ask me why it's included; I don't feel it's merely for fun, there must be some reason behind it (honour, perhaps? Sub Ed). Maybe it's an option every Samurai has if he or she is losing, dignity instead of humiliation. Anyway, while in a battle you can press the Select button to stop the fight; the action instantly changes to your character, knelt down with your opponent standing behind. One swift strike and you're spitting blood.





Second Opinion

Corrects many of the faults of the first, although in the process loses many of features that made the original great.

Saul

The Score

Publisher	SONY JAPAN
Developer	SQUARESOFT
Released	OUT NOW (IMPORT)
Version	JAPANESE
Price	£69.99 (MAY VARY)
Genre	BEAT-'EM-UP
Players	1-2
Memory Card	✔
Analog	✔
Link-up	✔

GAMEPLAY **8**

ORIGINALITY **8**

LIFESPAN **8**

SOUND **8**

GRAPHICS **8**

OVERALL **88%**

in summary

Tweaked and untweaked, but still good.

Mortal Kombat Trilogy

Isn't it time this series suffered a fatality?

Ho hum... Mortal Kombat again. Another game, another motley collection of characters and lots of blood, guts and gimmicks to hide the fact that MK games lack depth. Mortal Kombat Trilogy is not, as you might expect, three games; instead it's a single MK feud featuring the characters from the first three games. There are 36 in all, four of which are secret. There are also four differing versions of already-available characters, accessed by highlighting one of them (Kung Lao, Jax, Kano and Rayden) and pressing Select. You certainly can't fault this title on quantity. Quality, however, is a different fist of fivers entirely.

The graphics in Mortal Kombat Trilogy are seriously 16-bit. It's as if the characters from previous console versions of Mortal Kombat have been plucked from the carts and dumped onto CD intact - this would explain the dodgy loading times for finishing moves, too.

The game's main malfunction, though, is the lack of modern, tactical fighting. In a good beat-'em-up, the player (like a boxer) must come to the fight with a plan, a strategy tailored to his strengths and his opponent's weaknesses. Mortal Kombat games fail to emphasise this, instead demanding simple move couplets to be repeated over and again, then modified when your foe eventually gets wise to it. This doesn't make the game easy, though - the computer-controlled characters pull off all sorts of speedy attacks and combos which are unattainable for human players, a cheesy, unsatisfying way to set a difficulty level.



Much has been made of the fact you can control the bosses such as Kintaro, Goro and Motaro. However, although devastatingly strong, they're extremely limited fighters - controlling them demands only marginally more talent than singing the Spice Girls at a Karaoke, but it's a good way for the young, learner, or simply ham-fisted to make progress before tackling a more credible character.

Of course, Mortal Kombat was never about sophisticated beat-'em-up action. Instead it makes its way with buckets of bones, gargantuan galas of guts, frightening fatalities and rivers of blood despite Enoch Powell being no longer with us. Alas, the grinding gore is becoming old hat, especially when superior fighters (most notably Killer Instinct) are now including fatalities and other such finishing moves. Perhaps Midway should've beefed up the quality of the combat rather quantity of the gimmicks for this one.

Mortal Kombat has a popular pedigree, but its reputation is going down faster than a White House aide. Even at twenty quid I can't really recommend this, especially since Tekken 2 is also on Platinum. Mortal Kombat fans will lap it up, but for EPM, Mortal Kombat no longer excites.

EPM

IAN

"...Even at twenty quid I can't really recommend this, especially since Tekken 2 is also on Platinum..."

FINISH HIM

These are the finishing moves available in Mortal Kombat Trilogy:

Fatality



Kill your foe. Each character has two fatalities.

Babality



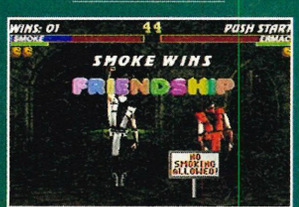
Turn your enemy into a baby.

Animality



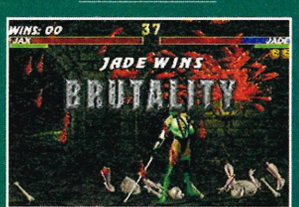
Morph into an animal before killing your foe.

Friendship



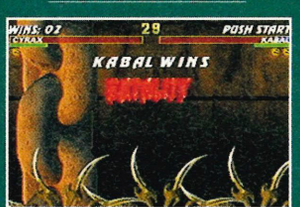
Kiss and make up.

Brutality



Beat your foe into a pulp.

Stage Fatality



These fatalities can only be achieved in certain arenas.

The Score

Publisher	GT INT.
Developer	MIDWAY
Released	OUT NOW
Version	UK
Price	£19.99
Genre	BEAT-EM-UP
Players	1-2

GAMEPLAY
7

ORIGINALITY
7

LIFESPAN
6

SOUND
7

GRAPHICS
5

OVERALL
60

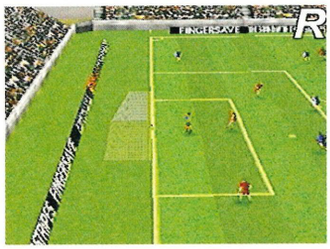
in summary

A classic case of gimmicks over gameplay.

adidas Power Soccer

'The score is going down...'

Oh dear. I know it's World Cup year and the video games world foes into a football fanatical feeding frenzy as a result, but was there really any reason to inflict this load of tosh on the unsuspecting public? Even at Platinum prices it's not worth a forged cup final ticket.



The game certainly doesn't lack options. There's commentary in any of three languages, with a female commentator if you enter the cheat code (Pause, press Select and press Square and Circle together with Audio highlighted), the pitch can reflect the weather in any of the four seasons, the referee can be made harsher or more forgiving (we recommend the latter) and you can play customised league and cup tournaments. Top-flight national teams from England, Germany and France are available, and although there aren't as many teams as found in a modern game, there's enough to keep you playing. Individual players aren't represented or even named, but this will only put off the purists. adidas is a game rather than a simulation. There are some fun gimmicks in the Arcade mode too, like shirt pulling, Predator shots, bicycle kicks, hand of God and even a kung-fu kick. These can be real fun to pull off.

Every gamer, spectacular soccer pundit or not, will resent the shoddy gameplay, though. The graphics are, in a nutshell, crap. In these motion-captured days you don't expect players to run like they're treading water. The D-Pad is overly sensitive too, making the players spin like tops at the slightest touch. Watching the goalie throw the ball out of his area is nothing short of hilarious too. He looks like he's ten-pin bowling!



Foul!

The graphics aren't the game's only failing either. The perspective is pretty ropy, the camera's insistence on keeping the ball in the centre of the screen at all times making it jerky and difficult on the eyes, and the viewpoint zooming in and out seemingly at will. The ball physics are below par too, with the bladder bouncing around like a pinball.

The game's biggest failing, though, is its gross inconsistency. Sometimes you can get away with tackling from behind, seemingly crippling your opponent, but other times the ref pulls you up. You can set the referee's eyesight to suit yourself (when I play, he's blind), but whatever the setting, he's grossly inconsistent. The computer-controlled goalies are inconsistent too, sometimes pulling off spectacular saves and letting in a soft shot ten minutes later.

The commentator's a pain too. His comments are repeated with alarming speed and bear little relation to what's going on in the game. If the referee misses a foul, he says the game isn't being officiated well. When, a few minutes later, the game picks up he says how it's living up to all expectations. Then the ref misses another foul and he's criticising the officials again. It's as if he has the short term memory of a goldfish, his comments reflecting the immediate incident only, irrespective of the game as a whole.

If it were better executed, adidas Power Soccer would make a welcome change from the FIFA-inspired 'umpteen button combinations' approach, offering a straightforward footie sim which is arcadey without losing touch with the host sport. As it stands, it's a rare blot on Psygnosis' copybook and should be given the red card.

EPM

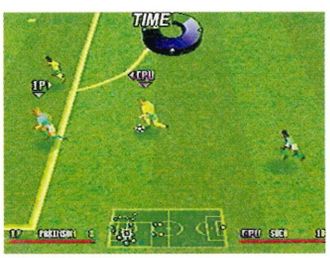
IAN

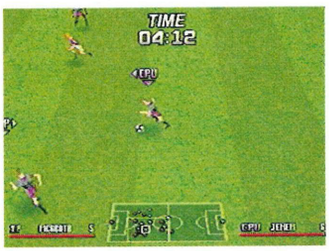


On the Tactics screen, press L2+R2+Square+X for the dream team.



"...Every gamer, soccer pundit or not, will resent the shoddy gameplay..."





The Score

Publisher	PSYGNOSIS
Developer	FDI FRENCH STUDIO
Released	OUT NOW
Version	UK
Price	£19.99
Genre	SPORTS SIM
Players	1-4
Memory Card	✔
Multi Tap	✔

GAMEPLAY **6**

ORIGINALITY **6**

LIFESPAN **4**

SOUND **5**

GRAPHICS **5**

OVERALL

39%

in summary

Even at this price, don't bother.

Formula 1

Avoid processional McLaren one-twos with this fast 'n' frugal classic.





As we speak the '97 update of Formula 1 has re-entered the games chart Top 10, mostly because the racing season has started again, causing a relapse of terminal F1 fever. This has especially gripped many of the newer PSX owners, who understandably want to ape the high-speed action on the TV screen.

In its day, though, this original version ruled the roost of racing games, its at-the-time cutting edge visuals luring great swathes of the software buying public into shelling out the readies. Now its twenty quid reincarnation provides a tempting alternative to its newer cousin (which looks set to stay full price for a lengthy period of time), especially as the improvements made in the new game are counterbalanced by some features that were present in the original but bafflingly left out of F1 '97.

Winning Formula

Whilst looking a touch rough nowadays, the graphics engine of Formula 1 is still its strong point, moving with a suitable swiftness and definition that enables the precise aiming and visual referencing that play ultimately revolves around. Indeed, in many aspects the graphics are superior to its sequel; the polygons often hold together in a markedly more solid fashion by comparison, which is particularly obvious in the tunnel section of Monaco, for example. Lacking the much-trumpeted (yet extremely useless) driver's eye view of F1 '97, the tendency is to use the higher helicopter angle to get a good line of sight rather than the snail-high nose cone view, but this doesn't detract much from the feeling of 'being there'. The steering is also a touch less reactive than its younger brother, but this is only apparent when playing them one after the other in direct contrast. Trackside landscapes are excellent, whilst the opposition look authentic and colourful (albeit in outdated 1995 liveries). A problem, though, with your fellow racers is that they lack the more evolved AI of CPU cars such as like that found in TOCA, meaning they have a tendency to follow a very train track-like path around the circuit, and also seem to be unaware of your overtaking manoeuvres a lot of the time, often forcing you into the barrier if you draw alongside and the racing line crosses your intended path. They also have an annoying tendency to slow down far too much on some corners, even on the highest levels, causing you to ram them from behind unwittingly.



"...Where Formula 1 really scores over its successor, though, is in the link-up and replay modes bafflingly left out of the newer title..."

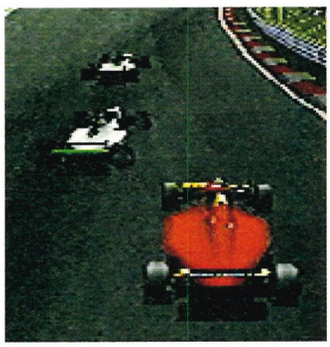
Serial Thrilla

Where Formula 1 really scores over its successor, though, is in the link-up and replay modes bafflingly left out of the newer title. With the help of a serial cable you can race head to head with a playmate in glorious full screen and with undiminished speed. The split-screen two-player option on F1 '97 was shockingly bad, and the omission of this highly entertaining mode of play was unforgivable. While being intensely enjoyable and competitive in itself, the head-to-head game was also perfectly complimented by the Replay facility that let you and your opponent watch the preceding race from multiple user-controlled viewpoints, allowing you to re-live the meatiest crashes and most daring overtakes over and over. Again this was taken out of the new version, presumably due to lack of memory, but it was a definite step backwards for Psygnosis to take.

Although Formula 1 is not as polished as F1 '97, it still has some definite advantages over the latter, and the cheap price tag is as always a strong draw. If you've been weaned on the more up-to-date game it may be hard to get used to the subtle driving model differences, but the multi-player aspect gives it a longevity factor that can't be denied. Just please turn the TV volume down when the impossible-to-silence menu screen music strikes up for all our sakes.

EPM

CHRISTIAN



The Score

Publisher	PSYGNOSIS
Developer	BIZARRE CREATIONS
Released	OUT NOW
Version	UK
Price	£19.99
Genre	DRIVING SIM
Players	1-2
Memory Card	✔
Link up	✔
Steering wheel	✔

GAMEPLAY
8

ORIGINALITY
7

LIFESPAN
9

SOUND
8

GRAPHICS
8

OVERALL
88%

in summary

Definitely not obsolete in comparison to the rest of the field.

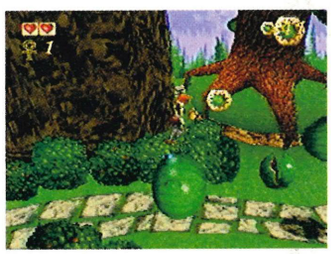
Pandemonium

See Nikki before she had a boob job...

Many (myself included) feel this game's better than the much-hyped sequel. On paper, it's nothing special - more running, jumping, baddie bumping, rootin', tootin', secret area lootin' material found in every other PlayStation platformer. When you start playing, though, you see it's so slickly executed it could win over even the most cynical of gamers.

The game's beauty is in its simplicity. Despite appearances, it isn't true 3D - the camera offers a three-dimensional view on the proceedings, but the player is restricted to moving on 'rails', offering freedom to go forward and backward but not right or left. Clever game design means this isn't a problem - the route is always clearly marked, whether it be a pathway through a garden, a narrow rampart with a sheer drop both sides or a clearly-defined track along a rocky terrain.

Nor does Pandemonium force you to master 83 different button combinations before you can get to the first restart point. Instead, you've a straightforward series of controls, differing slightly depending on which character you



> "...2D movement has made for some genuine 3D graphical perspectives without forcing programmers to offer a blocky environment..."

cane. Fargus, the 'off-centre jester', has a spinning attack which is ideal for ground-based baddies, but Nikki is faster and has a double jump, enabling her to reach higher platforms and pick-ups. They don't really offer differing challenges, and nor does the game demand you swap between them, using their unique skills as appropriate to meet differing hazards, though you can do this if you wish. Most gamers find which character's more to his liking and sticks to it.

The game's level design is superb. Each stage is different to the last, offering new monsters, traps and devices and a different flavour and atmosphere created by the dynamic graphics. The game is perfectly paced. The camera zooms in, offering a close-up when intricate leaping is demanded, but pans out just as quickly when you need to see a little more of what's around you when, for example, there are lots of monsters to mash. When you turn a corner (usually by pressing on forwards - you're on rails, remember), the camera swings so smoothly you'd mistake it for Roger Moore in silk pyjamas, but it never makes the controls awkward - indeed, 2D movement has made for some genuine 3D graphical perspectives without forcing programmers to offer a blocky environment which looks like it was built with Lego bricks.

Devious Design

Gameplay relies on foresight and reflexes rather than exploration. Your path through the game is largely defined for you, though occasionally you have to back-track after collecting a key. The most impressive aspect of the game is it never kills you unfairly. Whenever you die, you curse yourself for fluffing a jump or taking your eyes off the road and running into a baddie. You never feel short-changed because your character didn't respond to your joypad input quickly enough. Nor are you forced too far towards the edge of the screen, unable to react in time to an approaching foe or made to jump in the dark to a platform off the screen. This gives the game a real 'just one more go' feel, as you try to hide your embarrassment at falling by taking on the level again and living it through. The password system works well, too. If you die, your last password is automatically entered in the 'Passwords' option, so all you have to do is go for it - no need to type it in. Write down your last password when you've finished for the day, and you're ready to go next time you hit the disc. Some may prefer a memory card option, but I don't - the game simply doesn't demand one, so why waste valuable card space when a straightforward password will do?

Pandemonium is a wonderful game, much better than its ill-planned, frustrating successor. Okay, Nikki wears revolting tights, has a crap haircut and is generally not as much of a babe, but so what? It's gameplay that counts, and Pandemonium has it to spare. EPM

IAN



Nikki's less of a babe then in the sequel, but fargus is just as ugly.





The Score

Publisher	BMG
Developer	CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
Released	OUT NOW
Version	UK
Price	£19.99
Genre	PLATFORM
Players	1

GAMEPLAY	9
ORIGINALITY	7
LIFESPAN	8
SOUND	6
GRAPHICS	8
OVERALL	88%

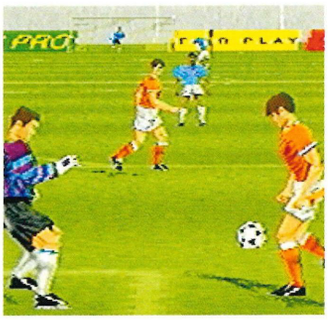
in summary

A fabulous blast from the past at budget prices.

International Superstar Soccer Pro

Classic PSX soccer returns on Platinum.





For a long time International Superstar Soccer Pro was the top PlayStation football game. Its perfect blend of arcade and simulation makes it instantly accessible for the beginner and challenging to the seasoned pro. It's been surpassed by the likes of Actua 2 and FIFA: Road to the World Cup since its release, but it still ranks in our hearts as one of the best footy games on the PlayStation. And now it's only twenty quid!

Graphically ISS Pro isn't really up to today's standards, but then it is well over a year old. The visuals look grainy and the characters aren't very well defined. Up against today's Premier League of football games, ISS Pro would be relegated immediately on the visuals front, but as we all know a football game isn't solely about graphics; it's about gameplay, something ISS Pro has more than enough of.

It's funny that some people still quote Sensible Soccer as their favourite football game. If you remember it you know how crap it looked, but didn't it play one hell of a game of footy? This is basically how I see ISS Pro. You're immediately hooked by the realistic feeling action on the screen so you couldn't give a monkey's nuts about the way it looks. In fact, ISS Pro doesn't look that bad, it's just that there's smoother, more refined looking games out there, but not at this price.

ISS Pro gives you a choice of four playing modes. Exhibition just equates to a friendly match. International League and International Cup are the two main games, but there's also a Penalty Kick game which doesn't last long, to tell the truth.

> **"...the kick, shoot, pass and through ball controls are just about enough to get an extremely flowing and realistic game of football going..."**

A Game of Two Halves...

Once you start playing ISS Pro you find it's hard to put the pad down. Things like food, sleep and toilet seem to pale into insignificance once you're hooked on ISS Pro. The gameplay is pretty simple in itself, so there's none of the really fancy moves found in FIFA: RTWC. In fact, ISS Pro doesn't need any special moves; the kick, shoot, pass and through ball controls are just about enough to get an extremely flowing and realistic game of football going. The passing is one of ISS Pro's best features. You can choose to pass to a player's feet, do a one-two pass or a devastating through ball. This, combined with the shot button powered by holding rather than tapping it, makes ISS Pro one of the most enjoyable control systems we've played on any football game, old or new. The kick button, which essentially acts as a cross, is a little harder to get used to but after some practice you have all of the control sorted. This all equates to some of the best football action going, which still holds its own against the big boys today.

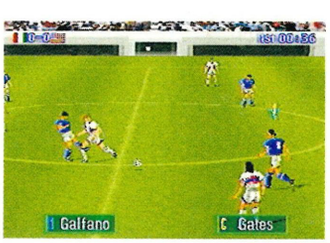
Although the onus is on the on-screen action, ISS Pro has a decent amount of formation and strategy options. You also have to keep an eye on your players' fitness before each game and make any changes to your squad accordingly. One thing ISS Pro doesn't have is real player names and teams. You're limited to simply playing international sides with made-up player names. This, however, shouldn't bother many, apart from those die-hard stats fans out there. Every single player name has a little bouncing face next to it - a sad face means that the player should sit the game out, whereas a happy, bouncing face shows you that the player is raring to kick some butt. This is a nice little touch to a genre that most definitely takes itself too seriously.

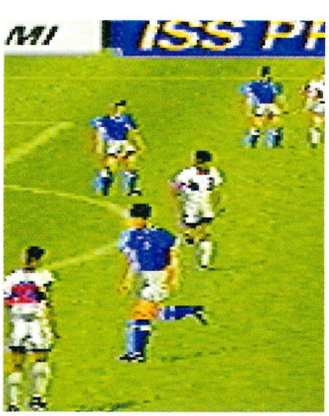
ISS Pro is getting on a bit now, but its return to the scene is most definitely welcome. A lot of you will have missed it the first time around, so now's your chance to get it - and at less than half its original price, you'll be left in the changing rooms if you don't.

EPM

SAUL







The Score

Publisher	KONAMI
Developer	IN HOUSE
Released	OUT NOW
Version	UK
Price	£19.99
Genre	SPORTS SIM
Players	1-2
Memory Card	✔

GAMEPLAY
9

ORIGINALITY
7

LIFESPAN
9

SOUND
8

GRAPHICS
7

OVERALL
90

in summary

Still one of the best.

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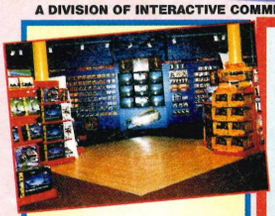
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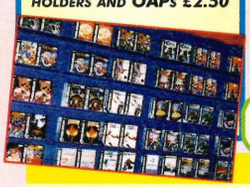
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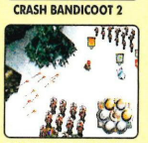

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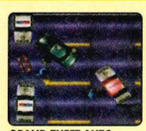
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NUCLEAR STRIKE


RAMPAGE WORLD TOUR


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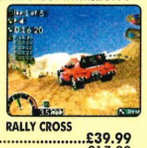

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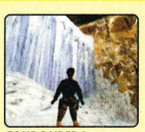

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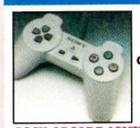
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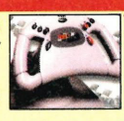
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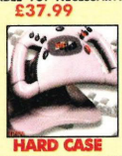
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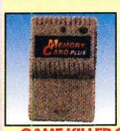
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EXP(5)

Shoot your load

Another genre feature, another smutty title. This time it's the shoot-em-up's turn to come under the extreme PlayStation microscope

Blast from the Past

The shoot-'em-up has a long and glorious history. Here's just a few of the games that shaped the genre...

The first ever shoot-'em-up (and indeed the first ever computer game) was Space War, written in 1962. Two simple ships, drawn with vector graphics, fought it out. It looked like the ship from Asteroids fighting an identical craft against a plain black background. In those days it took a computer the size of a room to run it, but in the early Seventies Nolan Bushnell produced a coin-operated version called Computer Space. Although mildly popular, it wasn't until 1978 that the coin-op blaster came into its own with Space Invaders. With just three controls (left, right, fire) and monochrome graphics projected onto a printed backdrop it was hardly sophisticated, but in its day, it wowed.

Galaxians took up where Space Invaders left off, featuring colour graphics and aliens that broke formation and swooped into attack. More advanced still was Williams' Defender, the first game featuring horizontal scrolling.

Atari produced some very innovative coin-ops around this time. 1979's Asteroids featured vector graphics, as did Battlezone, a simple tank combat game which created video games' first 3D environment. Missile Command was controlled using a tracker ball rather than a joystick, the player controlling a targeting device rather than a character sprite.

As the seventies became the eighties, video games became more advanced. By 1985 we saw the release of Konami classics Nemesis and Salamander. These horizontally-scrolling classics were the first games to feature power-ups. In 1987 Irem released R-Type. Here, again for the first time, you could 'build' firepower by holding the fire button, firing a more powerful shot on release. 1988 saw the release of Fantasy Zone, a hugely influential Japanese-style cutesy blaster.

The 90s produced some brilliant games, but looking back, 1991's Xenon II seems over-rated. Its Bomb The Bass soundtrack set the standards for in-game music, but gameplay was only average, an accusation that could not be aimed at Electronic Arts' Gulf War opus Desert Strike. This launched a series of Strike games that's still going strong today.

Many shoot-'em-ups on today's ace machines are 3D, own-eye Doom-style offerings; we'll cover these in a future issue. The good old shoot-'em-up is far from dead, though. For the low-down on which blasters are hits and which to avoid, check out our round-up...

Sharp Shooting

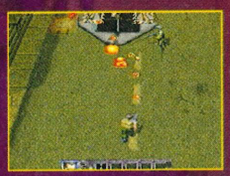
A brief guide to what makes a good shoot-'em-up.



- Enemies should differ in both appearance and actions. There's nothing more boring than a blaster whose foes all use the same attack patterns, weaponry, etc.
- When you die it should be your fault, not due to the game throwing too many aliens on the screen at once, forcing you to fall and use your short period of invulnerability to wipe 'em out.
- Likewise, if you're offered alternative routes to follow in a scrolling blaster, don't make one of them an off-screen dead end, sending the player to his doom with no chance of saving himself.
- A shoot-'em-up should be fast and frantic. By all means give the player a brief respite after a particularly tough baddie, but make sure there's always lots going on.
- If you have to read on-screen messages or select your own power-ups, make sure this can be achieved without distracting the player.
- Make sure the bullets are clearly visible against the backgrounds. You can't dodge what you can't see.
- Hidden routes or areas are always popular, and increase replay value.
- Don't take all the player's power-ups away when he dies. There's nothing worse than getting to Level Ten with all your lives intact, being killed once then throwing in the joypad 'cos your once-powerful craft now has only the poxy little gun you first started with and can't cope with the latter-level baddies.

CONTRA: LEGACY OF WAR

KONAMI



Hmmm... there's nothing disastrous about this 3D interpretation of the 2D Contra series (Gryzor in European arcades and Probotector on the home machines), but nothing particularly outstanding either. The usual Contra elements are here, including collectable wings offering power-ups, and you get a choice of four characters (including a fat git called Bubba), but overall, the game's nothing special. Giving one life per game but allowing your character to be hit several times doesn't excite, and affecting the number of times he can be hit is not a good way of setting the difficulty level.

It's in very bad taste to name a game after Central American terrorists who bombed and shot their way through Nicaragua, fighting an elected government with funding from the USA. Needless to say, the Contras in the game don't plant land mines which blow the legs off schoolchildren and Oliver North doesn't pay someone to blow up an ammo dump, taking out a hospital in the process.

60%

CRUSADER: NO REMORSE

ORIGIN



This game doesn't make life easy for the gamer. The optional rotate-and-move control method is better implemented than Lone Soldier's, but still awkward at first, and you can't fire on the run. The isometric 3D graphics are a joke (your guy's wet knicker walk is hilarious), but at least the camera remains still. Underneath it all, though, there's a great strategy-based shoot-'em-up with objects to use, puzzles to solve and scenery to interact with - virtually everything on the screen can be blown up, moved or searched. Due to the complex nature of the controls (the instructions list 25 commands), the lack of a tutorial mode is unforgivable. On the first level, you spend half your time leafing through the manual, but stick with it and the game's great design becomes apparent. There really is a top title at the heart of the game. Recommended, but only to those who can tolerate awful graphics and are prepared to persevere.

80%

IN THE HUNT

T*HQ



It's sluggish, simplistic and looks like an Amiga game written in 1993, but In the Hunt is still reasonably good fun. You control a submarine, armed with forward-firing torpedoes, depth charges and vertical torpedoes. The latter two weapons are operated by the same button, adding to the game's simplicity. You can't move your craft very fast, but you rarely need to - the entire game is played at a sedate pace. Release the D-Pad and your ship stays put - there's no automatic scrolling and inertia and gravity are non-existent.

In the Hunt is obviously designed with the younger gamer in mind, and none the worse for it either. If you find it cheap, it's ideal for your kid brother or young son, and certainly doesn't deserve the slating it got in certain lesser publications.

59%

LONE SOLDIER

TELSTAR

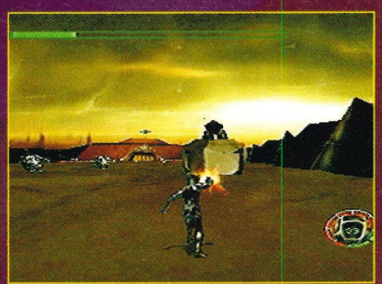


This insipid 3D blaster is one of the most miserable games yet released on the PSX. It's cursed by one of the worst control systems we've ever seen. Pressing Up moves you forward and Left/Right rotates the character. Fair enough, but when moving, you can only turn in 45 degree stages. Your man is incapable of travelling outside the simple eight directions ie. forward/backward, left/right and the diagonals. So much for precision. While standing still you can rotate your character more accurately using the shoulder buttons, but cannot move in the exact direction you're facing after doing so - your character just reverts to the closest of the eight directions explained earlier. Inevitably, you move towards the enemy then stand still to aim and shoot, then move on again. It would be easier to just run and ignore the foes, but you have to kill a certain percentage or do the level again. What a con.

22%

MDK

INTERPLAY



Developers Shiny Entertainment excelled themselves in the 'originality' department here - this really is a game like no other. Set in a true 3D environment, there's plenty of Doom-style exploration involving hidden doors and platform jumps. This is no clone though - instead of an own-eye perspective, the camera above and behind the character. Choice of weapons is more than just matching the most appropriate gun to the task in hand too. Progress depends on the correct use of objects in an almost adventure-like fashion, especially when shooting a far-off foe using the game's unique crosshairs-and-telescopics sniper mode. Its cyberpunk atmosphere makes it a real experience, but it won't last - the game's too easy.

85%

SOVIET STRIKE

ELECTRONIC ARTS (PLATINUM)



The Strike series were always more cerebral than the usual shoot-'em-up, and Soviet Strike is the most strategic of all. You need to tread that fine line between stealth and aggression if you're to get very far into the game. The map screen is superb, enabling you to plan your moves and explore at leisure instead of firing away and letting the game do your thinking for you. EA finally moved away from the idea of relying on alternative vehicles for you to control (they never felt right), and instead concentrate on quality and depth. The chopper handles like a dream, though occasionally the camera feels a little too close to the aircraft. Still, at £20 it's a 'must' for anyone's collection.

91%

NUCLEAR STRIKE

ELECTRONIC ARTS



The second PSX Strike game is basically 'more of the same', but as its predecessor (Soviet Strike) was superb, that's no bad thing. It's not as tough as Soviet Strike, but suffers from the same lack of restart points. There's a password at the end of each of the six levels, but as these are huge, ten-mission affairs, there's a lot of game between them. The FMV, as before, is superb, setting the scene brilliantly and advancing the storyline without ever getting in the way of the action.

There are vehicles other than the main helicopter here, but they handle better and fit into the game more easily than those in the revolting Mega Drive monster Urban Strike. What next? Outer Space Strike? Time Travel Strike?

89%

PARODIUS DELUXE

KONAMI



I don't care what anyone else says - I really like Parodius. It's so Japanese it has raw fish and sake for breakfast and is cuter than Kylie Minogue, circa 1987. Gameplay is similar to that other Konami classic Nemesis, with 2D horizontal scrolling and power-ups collected by exchanging pick-ups found during the game. You can choose to cash in your goods or collect more and wait for a stronger power-up. Alternatively, you can let the game choose for you and concentrate on the blasting. Pity you lose the lot when you die, though.

If the game's so good, why the relatively low mark? Despite the 'Deluxe' suffix, it seems the only difference between this and the SNES cart is that ours slows down for disc accessing. On a compilation with, say, Nemesis and Salamander, or even a twin pack, it would be a blast. It's poor value on its own, though.

70%

EINHANDER

SQUARESOFT (JAPANESE IMPORT)



This 'Silkworm for the millennium generation' has got it all. It offers multiple scrolling directions in glorious 2.5D, which, for once, works. The camera offers a mostly-2D perspective, but occasionally swings into 3D action, though ship movement is still 2D. You never feel you should be able to move in ways which you can't; you just get a different view of the glorious graphics - this is arguably the best-looking blaster on the PSX.

Applying the same attention to detail as for their RPGs, Squaresoft have designed some great collectable secondary weapons which you can cycle between at will. They eventually run out of ammo, so losing them when you die is less of a problem than it could've been - the power-ups aren't essential to success. The enemies are superb too, each type offering a different challenge. Rumours abound about Einhander's imminent Euro-release - let's hope they prove correct.

93%

PHILOSOMA

SCEE

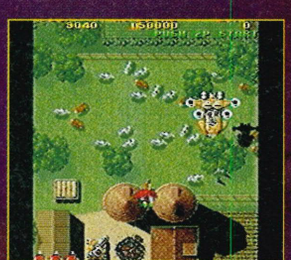


It's extremely dated, as cheesy as hell and its graphics wouldn't stretch a SNES, but somehow Philosoma is still mildly entertaining. It offers multiple perspectives (horizontal scroll, vertical scroll, 3D), some of which work better than others. The game would be more satisfying with fewer hazards and weaker shields, injecting a greater degree of immediacy into the proceedings and putting the fear back into being hit. As it stands, the player's tempted to run through a hail of bullets to collect a power-up, ignoring the enemy's fire. Lack or restart points after a continue are a pain too. Even as it stands, the game's enjoyable, albeit not outstanding. It's not worth splashing out on as a full pricer, but worth a look if you can rent it.

55%

RAIDEN PROJECT

OCEAN

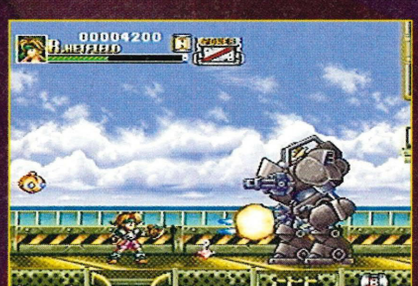


Two old but not ancient vertical scrollers on the same disc, namely the very-similar Raiden and Raiden II. The arcade machines from which the games are ported featured screens which were longer than they were wide, hence the ugly black borders cutting the PSX version's down to size, and making precision control difficult to boot. If you remember Tiger Shark, you know what to expect - power-ups upgrade your weapons in stages rather than each particular goodie offering one particular weapon, you face air- and ground-based forces and you blast tanks in two stages, your first hit taking their turrets, the second leaving a smoking crater where the enemy vehicle once stood. It's about as fashionable as paisley bracers, and cursed by taking the player's upgrades every time he dies, leaving him virtually defenceless if he falls in a difficult area (and where else would he die?).

49%

RAPID RELOAD

SCE



A release from the dawn of the PSX, and one of the machine's few platform blasters. Pity it's not particularly good, though. The graphics wouldn't tax a Mega Drive, and the animation would positively embarrass it. The action's frantic but one-dimensional and repetitive, and frankly, the game as a whole is more than a little boring.

It's very Japanese, with its bright, colourful graphics, characters that manage to look cute even when pounding the snot out of each other and blokes that look like babes, but even fans of Japanese-style outings should give this a wide berth. It isn't cool, it's just another sub-standard, sorry-looking Mega Man clone.

41%

ROBOTRON X
GT INTERACTIVE



Let's face it; this update of the classic opus Robotron was never going to be as satisfying as its 16-bit gore-splattered offspring Smash TV, but it could've been better than it is. The flickering graphics, intended to represent pulsating electricity, get on your nerves very quickly and the 3D camera perspective moves too much for comfort. Yes, the original top-down overview would look dated, but it would be far more practical. The heart of the game's there, though.

70%

VIEWPOINT
ELECTRONIC ARTS



Weird. Old-looking, but weird. This is a diagonally-scrolling shoot-'em-up in the Zaxxon mould where you build your shots by holding the fire button, R-Type-style. For once the game looks like a PlayStation game, rather than a relic found in a dusty attic underneath the Rubik's Cube and a fistful of Beano and Dandy's from the 1970s. Viewpoint isn't the longest game on the PSX, but it's certainly tough enough to stop you completing it in a day. The excellent password system means you don't get bored with the first few levels either. The game's major malady is that the sprites don't excite. They're just anonymous robotic creations for which you feel neither affinity nor enmity. It's not a bad game; it's certainly worth a look if you find it cheap enough, but there isn't enough to it to justify splashing out the best part of £40.

55%

X2
TEAM 17



Wow! With today's obsession with flashy 3D, it's refreshing to see a good old-fashioned, single-minded 2D horizontal/vertical scroller. The graphics are excellent - even if the game style is dated and the visuals are right up to scratch, as is the thumping techno soundtrack from Bjorn Lynne. What really makes the game, though, is the design. The enemies not only look and feel different, they also behave differently when on screen. Each has its own particular attack patterns, so to get anywhere you must observe and analyse their formations and find the chink in their armour. With so many games offering only different graphics and hits needed to kill, X2 is a welcome breath of fresh air. Like many other Team 17 games, it's a bitch to beat. If you think you're an ace gamer, now's your chance to prove it! Great stuff.

81%

STEEL REIGN
SCEE



This is the game the analog pad was made for. Each of the two sticks controls a single tank track, so the vehicle is driven just like its military counterpart - two sticks forward to advance, one stick forward to turn, sticks in opposite directions to rotate on the spot, etc. Naturally, you can use the standard pad too, but it isn't as much fun. The game itself isn't bad, a tank-based blast fest which sees you battering your way through legions of ground- and air-based enemy vehicles and troops. Trouble is, it's so one-dimensional. Blast a baddie, move on, grab a power-up, move on, cross a river, move on... What's here's good, but it lacks sparkle. It's a gas in two-player mode, though.

68%

TEMPEST X3
ATARI



Another day, another retro game. This one's been updated, but it's still hardly 90s material. For those who don't know, your craft is limited to the edge of the tubular shape, moving clockwise and anti-clockwise with the D-Pad. Enemies ride the lanes inside the tubes, advancing on your craft firing as they go. You blast their bullets as well as the aliens themselves. Despite its PlayStation update (with the original game on the same CD), it isn't really fun. You can get through the first few levels by holding one direction and the fire button at the same time, but even when it gets trickier the game's still too one-dimensional to thrill. Still, it has a cult following.

57%



Well, that's it for another month, Next issue, we'll bring you some top light gun action. Don't miss it!

STUFF

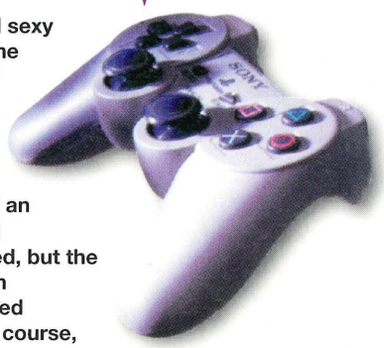
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VERDICT - The vibrations add an interesting new dimension, and ergonomics have been improved, but the sticks still don't provide enough resistance for the bigger-fingered players out there. Expensive of course, but rather posy nonetheless.

9/10

G&C ENGINEERING VIDEO INTERACTOR

RRP - £99.95

This sturdy metal-tube frame and seat act as a platform to attach your steering wheel and pedals to. Fully adjustable and collapsible, it should move your racing game experiences up a gear.



VERDICT - When this arrived in the office everyone took a turn sitting on it and making 'vrooom' noises. Surprisingly comfortable and well put together it is a touch bulky, but can be folded away and stored without too much hassle.

8.5/10

GAMESTER PSX STEERING WHEEL

RRP - £59.99

The reduced price from its earlier incarnation stands it in fine stead, and the arrival of the Interactor gives it a whole new rigidly-held-in-position context.



VERDICT - Still doesn't feel sturdy enough to me, but with the right game and some fine-tuned calibration a bundle of fun is there for the taking.

8.5/10

SONY COLOURED MEMORY CARDS

RRP - £14.99

As bitter experience in this very office has shown, losing saved games off your card is a tragic, heartrending loss. Sony's own card may not be the cheapest or most capacious, but by jiminy they're as reliable as a Volkswagen.

VERDICT - Attractively encased in finest transparent-coloured plastic, this range is the best way to avoid the horror of data disappearance.

9/10



ASCII ARCADE STICK

RRP - £49.99

A great big chunky block of high-impact plastic that has a great big knob sticking out of it.



VERDICT - As our intrepid Tekken 3 black belt Saul 'The Dragon' Trewern found out this month, it's ideal for multi-button fighting games. Damn noisy though.

7.5/10

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Ex-Communication

THE VOICE OF REASON

Oi EPM... No!!!
Dull Reviews!
Dull Presentation!
Old News!
Old Hat!
Bandwagon Rag!
PS. Do I win the goodies? No?! I didn't think so!
PPS. I'm glad my mate Martin the Mug paid for it too!
Chris, Norfolk

EPM: Good to see that Saddam Hussein's Anthrax perfume has reached the shires first, Chris, and debilitated your higher cognitive functions. You are of course wrong on all counts, especially the last one as without doubt your missive was the most entertaining we've had for ages. We wanted to give you the Star Letter award, but as you didn't include your full address, we threw your prize in the quay. As for jumping on the bandwagon; isn't that what you're doing by modelling your letter on Saul's Chill review from last ish, which was in turn 'inspired' by Harry Enfield?

EPM: THE NEXT GENERATION

Dear EPM,
At my school we had a competition to design a poster to advertise a book that we like. I chose Extreme Playstation and Lara Croft. I came 1st and I thought you might like to see it.
Tarren Sharp (age 9) Gravesend

EPM: On second thoughts, the Star Letter prize has had a reprieve from its bitter and watery grave. Good to see one so young developing a fine and refined taste for the better things in life at such an early stage in their life. Give us a ring on 01202 679000 and let us know what game you want. We're not starting a readers' art gallery, though, so there's no point in the EPM faithful sending us further pics - this is definitely a one-off.

CHIPS 'N' GRAVY

Dear EPM,
First of all I would like to say your magazine is the best and I subscribed after the first issue. EPM is up to date and gives reviews and previews on all the new games that are coming out in the next year or so, but how come the Americans and the Japanese get the games so much earlier than we do? I mean, they got Resident Evil 2, Gran Turismo, Men in Black, Gex 3D: Enter the Gecko and Masters of the Teras Kasi, etc. We don't get games like that until around six months later. This has led to a lot of people getting their PlayStations 'chipped' so that they can play these games now instead of in half a year's time. This also means they can use pirated software as well as imports . All of my mates say that they are going to keep well away from pirated games and just buy imports. What are your views about the decoder chip?

• EPM: Yes, 'chipping' can open up the over-priced and under-translated world of often full-screen and full speed import games, but it also invalidates your warranty, and doesn't do the internal workings of the PSX any favours. You can play dodgy pirate gold discs, but this is of questionable legality and again they bugger up your little grey box eventually.

When is Tomorrow Never Dies going to be released on the PlayStation and when are you going to do a preview of it?

• EPM: MGM/Electronic Arts have pencilled in a release date for early November, and you can expect a preview a couple of months before that.

How long do we have to wait for Crash 3?

• EPM: No news as yet, but such a successful dude is bound to bound back for more. In the meantime check out Gex 2 for similar japes.

When is the X-Files game going to arrive? What style of game will it be? Will it be based on the film 'Redux'?

• EPM: Er, not sure on all counts, I'm afraid, but The Truth is Out There...

What do you think the top five Playstation games will be this year?

• EPM: Too early to give a definite view yet, but in all likelihood Gran Tursimo and Resident Evil 2 will be sure bets for inclusion.

Will the game Spice World be as bad as their music?

• EPM: Rest assured the game will show the same attitude towards marketing and authenticity as their tunes do.

When will Time Crisis 2 come out? I have read a review on the arcade version and it looks a lot better than the first and has an extra bonus - it's two-player! Is it going to be like that on the PlayStation? Will you have to use a link up?

• EPM: Namco haven't given a release date yet, but Christmas '98 seems a good bet; probably; and hopefully.

If I have the following games: Cool Boarders 2, Reloaded, Grand Theft Auto, Crash Bandicoot 2, V Rally, Test Drive 4, Time Crisis, Croc, Die Hard Trilogy, Tekken 2, Psychic Force, Ridge Racer and Oddworld, What else should I get?

• EPM: WipEout 2097, Micro Machines V3, Soul Blade, Tomb Raider 2, Resident Evil - Director's Cut, Tempest X3, Formula 1 '97. And that's just for starters.
J. Mychalkiw Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

WILY INQUIRY

Dear EPM,
1. Congratulations on the best PSX mag ever! I've got the first three issues and I'm going to subscribe.

• EPM: Cheers!

2. Please could you tell me about Premier Manager '98? It looks class, and also could you review Grand Theft Auto (I totally agree with that bloke who wrote in last month about the BBFC).

• EPM: Premier Manager was held over from December last year to April '98 (to coincide with World Cup Fever, no doubt), and is reviewed on Page 76 of this very issue. As for GTA, it's a brilliant idea let down by shoddy graphics and game design. Top to play for an evening but soon the cracks begin to show. Irritatingly better on the PC. For similiar thrills in 3D, try New Level's Courier Crisis.

3. Have you any cheats for CoolBoarders 2?

• EPM: Not as yet, and anyway you can't have played it for very long before deciding to resort to cheating. Play the game and beat it, don't succumb to the seductive temptations of the easy ride.

4. I feel like getting Time Crisis, but 60 quid for the game and gun? I don't think it is worth it as you can't use the G-Con for any other decent games. Do you agree?

• EPM: Yes it is pricey and Namco game-specific, but the GunCom (to give it it's proper non-Politically Correct title) is easily the best light gun available. You can use it on the soon-to-come Point Blank (which for my money is a better game all round than Time Crisis) and the import Elemental Gearbolt. However, for a full and comprehensive rundown check out next month's high-calibre Light Gun Feature.
Ronan O'Malley, Middlesex

DIMENSIONALLY CHALLENGED

Dear EPM,
I, an avid computer games player, would like to ask a favour of you as I am not sure if there are any rules or regulations that I have to follow. I am the computer games reviewer on my school paper and I am thinking about doing a piece on the best PlayStation magazines to buy and I wish to include your publication in the said article

• EPM: By all means, mate, just as long as EPM comes top of the list. If it doesn't, we'll come over and put a cap in your ass. Seriously, as long

This month's Ex-Communication is sponsored by Gameplay, and the writer of the letter of the month wins a game of his or her choice. This month's winner is Tarren Sharp of Gravesend. Give us a bell, Tarren, and let us know which game you want. From now on, if you write to Ex-Communication, let us know what game you want if you win. Include your address too. No game or no address and it's no prize!

as a review is fair and accurate, you don't need anyone's permission to write it.

Also, in Issue Three what the hell were you on about when somebody asked whether to buy Tekken 3 or Street Fighter Ex+alpha and you guys replied, "depends on whether you like 2D or 3D beat-'em-ups". Correct me if I'm wrong, but aren't they BOTH 3D battlers?

• EPM: Technically, as far as the graphics go that's true, but in SF EX+alpha you can only fight in one plane of movement, head-on to an opponent, making it effectively a '2.5' D game. Tekken 3, on the other hand, has a new side-step control that allows fighters to move around each other so it is a true three-dimensional fighting environment, as well as being polygon-based and hence 3D in its representation.
Steven Christie, Fife

TOOLED UP

Dear EPM,
As a new Playstation owner I want to buy a light gun. Which is the best to buy? Will it work with all games that you can use a light gun with? Great mag, but it should have a demo CD with it.
Arnie, Ormskirk

• EPM: Again check out next month's in-depth feature on light guns for the definitive rundown. As for covermounted CDs, yes they would be nice, but the magaine's price would have to rise accordingly. However, watch this space...

RACING LINES

Dear EPM,
I've got four racing games and I'm crap at them. Is it worth buying a steering wheel or analog controller, and if so which one?
Dean McMillan, Manchester

• EPM: Certain games are good with a steering wheel, others less so, but for really fine-tuned control I'd suggest waiting for the new Dual Analogue Pad from Sony, which have delicious rubber domes over the twin sticks that give excellent ergonomic feedback, coupled with the supple vibrations from within its stylish grey hull. Steering wheels are fun but expensive, usually need tedious re-calibrating and your heavy-handed mates will probably break them anyway.

NO WAY, JOSE

Dear EPM,
I was wondering if you had any cheats for Destruction Derby 2, PGA Tour 96 or FIFA '98. If so could you put them in your next issue of EPM.
Sean Ferguson, Fife

• EPM: In Destruction Derby 2, go to Championship mode and enter your name as one of the following:
All Tracks: MACSrPoo
Credits: CREDITZ!
FMV: ToNyPaRk
Can anyone help with the other two? We're giving prizes for the best tip we receive each month, so get writing!

SHORT AND SWEET

Dear EPM,
1. What is the best footy simulator?
2. When is Gran Turismo available?
3. What is the best snowboarding sim?
Craig Fletcher, Nowhereland

• EPM: FIFA 98 RTWC currently, but watch this space for the inevitable flood of World Cup-based games; May; Coolboarders 2. Next!

WHITE TRAINERS

Dear EPM,
Maiden Rule! Check out their new game 'Ed Hunter' when it comes out. It'll be miles better than the Spice Game!
Mat 'Venom' Cooper, S. Yorkshire

• EPM: Unfortunately we couldn't reproduce Mat's charming reproduction of the Iron Maiden logo here in all its glory. The prospect of a game based around the UK's most stalwart old-skool heavy metallers fills us with curiosity and anticipation for sure. One, two, three, four... 'Bring your daughter, Bring your daughter, to the slaugh-terrr...'

RANT AND ROLL

That's it as far as interesting letters go this month, I'm afraid; it's all just 'Lara's boobs this' and 'I'm stuck on Final Fantasy that' and 'Have you got a cheat for GimpBlaster 4', etc. Ex-Communication is an open forum for the discussion of all aspects of the wide, wide PlayStation universe, not just an inquiry line as to what the best purchase is; that's what the reviews section's for. Let's hear your OPINION on things, your views on controversial or ignored subjects.
What gets on your wick about software company's attitudes towards quality control say, or pricing/import policies? What about the constant reduction in the specification of the new, cheaper PlayStations? How about the danger of too much 'realism' in games? Or the criminal lack of a serial link mode in racing titles nowadays, with poxy squinty split-screen play the only option? C'mon kids, make us proud.

Got a whine? Drop us a line! Send your merry missives on all things PlayStation to:

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QUAY MAGAZINE PUBLISHING
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POOLE
DORSET
BH15 1JF

e-mail...
epm@quaynet.co.uk



SWINDLERS INC.

THESE CHEATS ARE DEDICATED TO PAM AND TOMMY - THANKS FOR A 'TOP NOTCH' PERFORMANCE. BUT NEXT TIME, TOMMY, PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE KEEP THAT BLOODY CAMERA STILL. ANYWAY, HERE'S A BATCH OF THE HOTTEST CODES SWEEPING THE NATION.

THE NEED FOR SPEED 3: HOT PURSUIT

ALL CARS, ALL STANDARD TRACKS
Enter SPOILT as a name on the options screen.

ADDITIONAL CAMERA VIEWS
Enter SEEALL as a name on the options screen. Additional views normally only available during replays will be available under the options screen.

BONUS TRACKS
Enter one of the following names at the options screen to race on the corresponding track.

TRACK	DESCRIPTION	NAME
The Room	Toy car track	PLAYTM
Caverns	Underground track	XCAV8
AutoCross	Canyon track	XCNTRY
SpaceRace	Space station track	MNBEAM
Scorpio-7	Underwater track	GLDFSH
Empire City	Bonus track	MCITYZ

BONUS CARS
Enter one of the following names at the options screen to race with the corresponding car.

CAR	NAME
Jaguar XJR-15	1JAGX
Mercedes Benz CLK GTR	AMGMRC
El Nino supercar	ROCKET



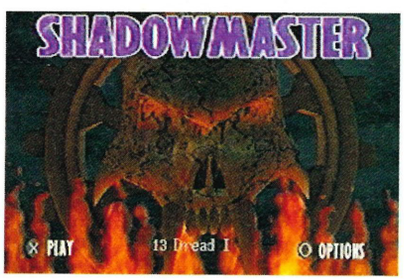
SHADOWMASTER

To be able to activate these cheats you first need to go into the game and start Level One. As you start the level, you see two Shadowfists come from behind a stone door. Kill them and then enter the room, then press the following keys to access the relevent cheats:

INVINCIBILITY: Press L1, L2, R1, R2, and ✖ at the same time. You should get a blue flash if you've been successful at accessing the cheat

ALL WEAPONS: Press L1, L2, R1, R2, and ■ at the same time. This time you should get purple flash.

LEVEL SELECT: Press L1, L2, R1, R2, and ▲ at the same time. This time there's a green flash. Now exit from the game and go back to the main screen. You should now see all the levels open to you.



STAR WARS: MASTERS OF THE TERAS KASI

When you've finished the game, you can obtain several hidden characters to fight.

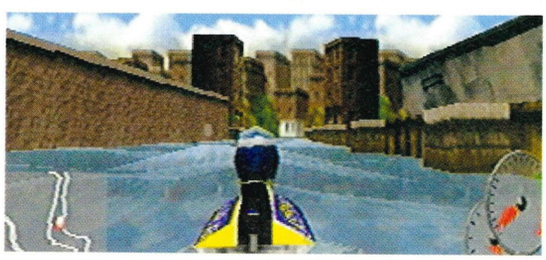


STORMTROOPER: Complete the game on hard setting with Han Solo.
DARTH VADER: Complete the game using Luke Skywalker on any setting.
JODO KAST: Play the survival mode and beat all ten fighters.
SLAVE LEIA: Beat the game with Princess Leia on the Jedi level of difficulty.
MARA JADE: To get Mara Jade you must press and hold L1+L2+R1 when you enter the team mode. The difficulty setting must be set on Jedi. If this is done correctly, the computer automatically selects your fighters and the battle for Mara Jade begins. If you beat the computer, she becomes a playable fighter.

LEVEL SELECT: Play through the game with Chewbacca on any setting.

POWERBOAT RACING

BIG HEAD MODE
Enter DEFORM as a player name.



Pitfall 3D

ORIGINAL PITFALL MINI-GAME
Enter CRANESBABY as a password.

EXTRA LIFE
Enter GIVEMELIFE as a password.

VIEW FMV SEQUENCES
Enter PLAYMOVIES as a password.

VIEW CREDITS
Enter CREDITS as a password.

FLYING MODE
Enter ZEROGHARRY as a password.

INVISIBILITY
Enter 2DHARRY as a password. Although Harry will disappear, he is still vulnerable to attacks.

BIG HEAD MODE
Enter BIGHEADHARY as a password.

SHOW COMIC BOOK SCENES
Enter PITFALLCOMIC as a password.

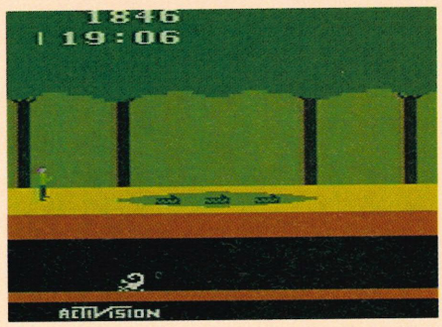
99 LIVES
Enter STEVECRANEME as a password to begin the game with ninety-nine lives.

LEVEL 3 WITH 56 LIVES
Enter DISCOLIGHTS5 as a password.

DISABLE COMMENTS FROM HARRY
Enter STOPTALKING as a password.

DEMO GAME
Enter VIGILANTE as a password.

LEVEL NAME	PASSWORD
City Of Shenrak	METROPOLIS
Underground Caverns	DEEPDARK
Moku Temple	TEMPLEME
Gladiator	GEEHEISBIG
Blister Fields	HOTROCKS
Desert Into Volcano	GOINGDOWN
Blazing Flood	WOWTHATSHOT
Kryll Thular	BIGWORMGUY
Cell Blocks	JAILBREAK
Life Extraction	THUNDERDOMES
Dark Vale	MAGICGARDEN
Crystal Matrix	SPOOKYMESASE
The Scourge	BESTFORLAST



Platinum Tips

Mortal Kombat Trilogy

ORIGINAL CHARACTERS
To get the original versions of Kung Lao, Jax, Kano and Rayden, highlight the character and press Select.

RANDOM CHARACTER
On the selection screen, hold Up and press Start to have the CPU choose for you.

'?' SCREEN
To access the '?' option, go to the Options screen and hold all four shoulder buttons until the screen shakes with a crunch. This gives extra options. To perform a one-button finishing move, stand right next to your defeated opponent and press any button. Different buttons offer a different finisher.



SHAO KAHN'S TREASURE CHEST
When you beat Shao Khan, you can choose one of the following;
1: Character endings
2: Fight Chameleon
3: MK Classic Endurance Kombat
4: MK2 Classic Endurance Kombat
5: Random
6: Fatality #1
7: Fatality #2
8: Fatality #3
9: Super Endurance
10: Battle with bosses
11: Mega Endurance
12: Supreme fatality

Pandemonium

Enter these codes on the password screen for secret game modes.

EFFECTS
TWISTEYE: Hold L1 and L2 and move the D-Pad Left or Right to rotate the screen, pressing Down to return it to normal
THETHING: Changes body shapes. Hold L2 and press C to cycle through them and X to return to normal

CHEATS
BODYSWAP: Press T to change characters mid-level
BORNFREE: Level select
CASHDASH: Bonus stage after a level
CORONARY: Lots of hearts
EVILDEAD: Immortal enemies
HARDBODY: Invincibility
INANDOUT: Quitting returns you to map
OTTOFIRE: Last weapon collected is permanent
TOMMYBOY: Play pinball after a level
VITAMINS: 31 lives

Formula 1

Input these cheats on the screen offering Practice, Qualify and Race options.

Lava Mode: S,C,U,R,R,C,X
Bike Mode: D,U,C,T,R,U,S,T
Bonus Track: L,C,C,T,T,C,U,R
Buggy Mode: R,U,T,L,U,S,T
German Commentary: D,U,L,L,S,C,X
Gibberish Commentary: L,C,U,D,D,R,C,S,S
Spanish Commentary: T,O,R,O,T,O,R,O

Player's Guide

Resident Evil 2

Claire's Route

• City Area

You need to run past the eight zombies roaming the streets until you come to the gun shop. After the cut scene, explore the shop to find a box of Gun Bullets on the shelf behind the main counter and another on top of the crate behind the second counter. Collect these and come back out from behind the counters. The zombies break through the shop window and attack the store owner. Go back round the counters and use them as cover while blasting the zombies. When they're all dead, collect the Bow Gun from the corpse of the shop owner and head out the back door and into the alley.

In the alleyway you see some zombies in a caged basketball court to the left. Continue to the van and collect another refill of Gun Bullets. At this point the zombies come out from the court and head towards you. Shoot them in the head to kill them. With them dead, go through the basketball court, running past the next walking corpse, to come to a metal walkway.

Go up the stairs and follow the gantry to the other side and go down the next steps. Look between the two bins to your right for a box of Hand Gun Bullets. Climb over the skip and shoot the four zombies, then exit through the gate at the end of the alleyway. Run past the next four zombies and enter the bus. Search the duffel bag on the left to pick up more bullets. Use these to kill the two flesh eaters in the bus and exit by the door at the far end. Don't waste your bullets on the next five zombies; instead run past and come to another gate. Head through and follow the path to arrive at the Racoon City Police Station.

• Police Station

In the police station, head down to the front staircase and go through the door at the back left of the main hall. You meet an injured copper who gives you his Blue Key Card and forces you out of the room. Use the card on the computer terminal to unlock the other two doors. Collect the Ink Ribbon and Gun Bullets.

• Reception Area One

Enter the room. Behind the front door on the left of the of the hall you see an item box and a police memorandum file. Use the lock pick on the drawer on the small desk to discover some First Aid Spray. Go through the back door to see a Licker scurry past the window.

• Circuit Box Hall One

This room contains a Circuit Box and a Green Herb. When you reach the pool of blood on the floor, a Licker drops down from the ceiling. Use the Bow Gun and fire some rounds off to kill him, then continue through the wooden door into the hallway, with windows boarded up, and enter through the next door you see.

• Briefing Room

You notice a file on the desk. Go back into the hallway and follow it along until you come to a room with a set of stairs in it. Before you get the chance to collect the two Green Herbs from the front of the dark room, you need to tackle the four zombies you encounter, then enter in.

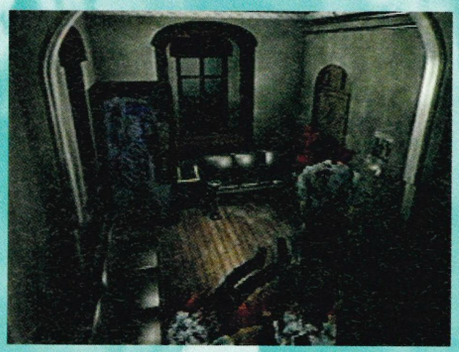
• Dark Room

Look at the typewriter to find an Ink Ribbon on the left on top of the filing cabinet. You also find a file at the back of the typewriter and you can now use this back part of the room to develop any film you discover later. The locker to the left of the door contains a costume change and a secret weapon. To get the key, you need to score a high grade in either Leon or Claire's 'B' game.

Leave and head up the nearby staircase. At the top, continue along until you arrive at a room with three statues in it. Push the right and left statues onto the pressure plates. You hear a clicking sound and the middle statue drop to reveal a Red Jewel. Pick this up and leave the room.

• Hallway to the Stars Office

Go through the first door and look for the Grenade Launcher, Chris's Diary and the Unicorn Medal. As you leave, the fax machine



bursts into life and prints the message 'Mail to Chris'. Go back and read the document. With the Unicorn Medal, head back to the Main Hall. As you proceed along the hallways, the zombies try and grab you through the unboarded windows. Use the Unicorn on the centre statue to make it drop the Spade Key. Now go through the door on the right at the front, to lead you to the second Reception Area. You must now deal with six zombies behind the door before collecting the Green Herb on the left of the vending machine. Go through the blue doors.

• Fan Room

You have now entered the fan room and you're up against five zombies. Shoot them and search the room for items. You find an Ink Ribbon on a table underneath the front ceiling fan and also a box of Hand Gun Bullets on the dead body in the back corner. In the entrance to the east staircase you see two Green Herbs. Head through the room and enter the Office Area for a locked safe and another Herb behind the desk. Back in Reception Area One you found a file with the numbers 2236 on it. This is the code to crack the safe, and once opened you discover a case of Acid Rounds and a Police Station Map. With these items added to your inventory go back to Circuit Box Hall one and enter the metal door.

• File Room

This room is in a mess - look carefully to find anything. On the shelf next to the door discover a file, and an Ink Ribbon in the supply cabinet on the right hand side of the door. Push the ladder against the back supply cabinet. Climb up to find a Crank on the top of the cabinet, then head back upstairs, past the statues and go back into the hallway leading to the STARS office. You see Sherry being attacked by a zombie. When she breaks free, shoot the flesh-eater to kill him.

• Reception Area Three

Proceed forward and open the next door using the Spade Key and enter the third Reception Area. Here you meet up with Leon and a cut scene starts. After the discussion, collect the box of Hand Gun Bullets from the cupboard at the end of the hallway behind Leon. Now use your lock pick on the desk situated on the right hand side of the room to find a case of Flame Rounds.

• Library

Go up the stairs and onto the balcony on the left. After a few steps you fall through to the room below. Look around find a box on the wall and a power switch that opens a secret passage. Go through the passage and activate the switch in the box on the wall to the left, allowing you to move the bookcases from left to right. Moving the two cases on right causes the box on the wall to open, revealing a Serpent Stone. Pick it up and go through the big doors.

Continue along the hallway ledge around the corner, avoiding the four zombies, to reach the emergency ladder. Lower the ladder to the first floor of the building, offering a quicker route between the main floors. With that done, continue along the ledge and enter the next room.

• Waiting Room

In here you find a file next to the typewriter and a lighter on the window ledge. An Ink Ribbon sits next to typewriter. With the lighter, go back to the briefing room with the fireplace and use it to create a fire. When you've lit the fire, the painting opens to reveal a Red Jewel. Go back up the stairs to the waiting room. Go through the next set of doors and shoot the two zombies in the Helicopter Hallway. Head to the Bird Hallway. As you progress down the corridor, shoot the crows as they fly down at you and check the dead body for another box of Hand Gun Bullets. Unlock the door to the east staircase. Find a Green Herb outside on the staircase, then as you walk past the windows, the birds swoop down and smash the glass - shoot them as they come in.

• City Area (part two)

Make your way to the Helicopter Rooftop. There's nothing here at the moment, so instead, climb down the metal stairs to the side and avoid the four zombies at the bottom to reach the small work area. Look to the back of the room near the desk to find an Ink Ribbon, a Bow Gun and a Valve Handle. If you try to go through the door next to the desk, you're attacked by two zombies. Go back up to the Helicopter Rooftop and head behind the metal fence. Now use the Valve

Handle on the water pressure valve to extinguish the helicopter. Walk back round from the fence and search the wreckage for a box of Hand Gun Bullets.

• police station

Go back to the Helicopter Hallway and go past the smouldering wreckage to the back door. You hear a scream from behind the locked door to the left. When you go through the door, you need the two Red Jewels - you're now in the Red Jewel



Statues Room. Place a Red Jewel in each of the two side statues to cause the middle one to open and reveal a Blue Stone and a key. Now head back across the station and down the stairs and enter the Locker Room on the right hallway.

• Locker room

Kill the five zombies. You find a quiver of Bow Gun Bolts in the locker facing the door by which you entered and a Plastic Bomb in the locker to the left of the other door. On the opposite wall, Film A's in the drawer. Leave the room through the other door and to find a badly injured cop. Pick up the Herb nearby. The copper's now in the office area and turns into a zombie as you approach - shoot him and collect the Detonator from the desk. If you're carrying the Plastic Bomb, then combine it with the Detonator. Over the other side of the room on the desk in front of the two lockers there's the Memo to Leon and a box of Hand Gun Bullets inside the lockers. Exit the room for the main hall.

• boarded-up hallway

Go to this area via the door at the back of Reception Area Two. You come face to face with four zombies. Don't waste your bullets on them; try to run past. If this doesn't work, shoot them in the head. You find a Red Herb, then follow the hallway to the end and go through the door at the back on the right. You're now in the Interrogation Viewing Room - you find another box of Hand Gun Bullets.

• interrogation room

Head back out into the hallway and enter the grey door on the right. You now need to use the key that you collected from the Red Jewel Statues Room to unlock the door to gain access. Be on your guard; once you've collected the wire and the Eagle Stone and try to leave, a Licker bursts through the two-way mirror and attacks you.

• blow up the helicopter

Head back to the hallway with the crashed helicopter and use the Bomb and the Detonator to blow it up and give you access to Chief Irons' Office. This section can only be accessed by Claire.

• chief irons' office

When you enter the office, the chair spins and you meet Chief Brian Irons. Exit the other door and head along the hallway until you reach the Art Display Room. Turn the lights on to see Sherry at the back part of the room. You also find a File and some First Aid Spray; go back to the Chief's room and pick up the Key on his desk. Chief Irons is no longer in the room, but there's a File on his chair. Look at the picture behind his desk; it opens to reveal a puzzle. To solve it you need to collect all the square stones and place them in the openings.

There's nothing more you can do on the main floors, so head down to the basement level. To reach it, go down the outside staircase on the east side and enter the Fan Room again. Use the new Key you've collected to exit through the locked door to come out in the Circuit Box Hall Two. Now use the wire you picked up on the Circuit Box to make the Metal Shutters drop to stop the zombies from entering the hallway from outside. Now collect the Green Herb and head down the stairs.

• police station basement one

At the bottom of the stairs you hear the sound of dogs barking. Head down the main tunnel until you reach the T-junction and shoot them. Go right and through the doors into the Power Room.

• power room

Pick up the Green Herb on your left, go round the centre machinery and collect the Map of the Police Station's Basement One Area. Walk to the Power Control Panel and set the switches in the following order; DOWN, UP, DOWN, UP. This powers up the card reader outside the Armoury.

Exit via the dirty metal door to the outer path and collect the Red Herb at the foot of the steps. Two more dogs attack. Run over to the manhole and drop down. When you emerge the dogs are facing you and not behind you, making life easier.

• under construction passageway

This area's discovered at the bottom of the manhole. Go through the door on the left, enter the storeroom, save your game and collect another Ink Ribbon from near the typewriter. Now exit - you meet Sherry. Once you have talked to her, she climbs through an opening in the passageway and comes into a dead end. You're in control of Sherry.

• sewage disposal

Get the lift up to the catwalk area. At the top you're confronted by two dogs. Sherry has no weapon, so run past as quickly as you can and head for the door on the left side of the catwalk, then enter. Go down the stairs to the empty pool area and push the three crates up against one another against the back wall. Come back up the stairs and flick the lever for the water to rush in and fill the pool. This leaves the three crates sat in a line. Walk across them to the other side and collect the key. Leave the room and collect the map hanging on the wall on the way out next to the door.



• cesspool

You need to run past the dogs and go through the other door. This leads to the cesspool area where you discover a case of Grenade Rounds and another key. Collect these and run back past the dogs again and grab the lift back down to the dead end area. You now gain control of Claire. You also have the items Shelly picked up. Head back to the main tunnel of the basement.

• police station basement one (pt 2)

When you get to the main section a Licker's found his way in, so kill him straight away. Use the key from Shelly to enter the Autopsy Room. Look in the locker at the far end on the left to find a Red Card Key, but as soon as you collect it, five zombies attack. You can't run so kill them. When they've been killed, head for the armoury. The card reader at the side of the door lets you in. Once through the door, you see some Bow Gun Shots and a box of Hand Gun Bullets on the left of the room. On the right is another box of bullets and a Sub-Machine Gun and Side Pack in the locker on the left at the end of the room. With everything collected, head back upstairs and into the Circuit Box Hall Two.

• police station

Using the Key from the Cesspool, you can now enter the door under the stairs to find living quarters. In the sleeping area you find a case of Acid Rounds and a File.

Exit the room and proceed to the boarded-up hallway again where the interrogation rooms were. Use the key again to open the green door at the back of the hallway, leading to the Press Room.

• press room

As soon as you walk through the door you must beat a Licker before you can search the room. On the table, collect Film B and head to the furnace at the back of the room. Use your lighter to ignite the furnace and turn on the three wall statues in the following order; 12, 13, 11. When all three statues have been lit, the Golden Cog drops from the wall painting. You now need to head to the Gear Room on the third floor, but make sure you're still carrying the Crank.

• gear room

Get the ladder up from the main hall onto the second floor and head for the library. Avoid the Licker and climb up the stairs in the library and enter the room at the top. This takes you to the Main Hallway Ledge Three, where you find the entrance to the Gear Room. As you approach the door another Licker blocks your path, so run past or shoot him. When inside the Gear Room, use the Crank on the square opening in the wall at the back. This lowers a wooden staircase leading to the attic area. Use the Golden Cogwheel on the machinery and a door opens to the right. You now discover the second Blue Stone. Combine this with the first one to create the Jaguar Stone.

• chief irons' room

Go back to the chief's room and meet up with Sherry again. She escorts you through the majority of the rest of the game. Head to the painting and use the three stones on it. When these are in place the wall opens to reveal a secret passage. Go through and collect the File lying on the floor and get the lift down to Chief Irons' Secret Room.

• chief irons' secret room

While your going down in the lift a cut scene shows Chief Irons being attacked by a monster. At the bottom, enter the room and you see the Chief.

Another cut scene tells you about Umbrella. Before he finishes he dies; you now get the chance to look around. You find a case of Acid Rounds, which you need to use against the thing that killed the Chief. Save your game position and head down the trapdoor ladder to come face to face with the monster. Use everything you got, especially the Acid Rounds, then head back to collect Sherry and then back down again. Drop the ladder down at the end of the metal walkway and climb down it to enter the second basement of the sewer section.

• sewer basement two

You meet Sherry's father, Mr William Birkin, but you can't talk to him as he's started to mutate thanks to the G-Virus. Run from him and escape into the next room. At this point Sherry gets sucked down through the floodgate and into another section of the sewers. You now gain control of her again, so go through the doorway into the Warehouse Room.

• warehouse room

You won't find anything in this room, so scramble through the air vent to reach the room the other side. Avoid the zombie and run through the bug-infested tunnel and head down the next big Air Vent. This leads you to the Small Trash Heap Room.

• small trash heap room

Collect the Wolf Medal off of the floor, causing the floor to open up and drop Sherry into the Garbage Room. A cut scene starts involving William Birkin, then you gain control of Claire again; climb up to the ledge that leads to the Control Room One.

• control room one

Collect the two Blue Herbs and enter the room. On the table you find a File and Hand Gun Bullets. In the lockers is First Aid Spray. There's an Ink Ribbon beside the typewriter. Use the Lock-Pick to gain entrance to the lower room in the warehouse. This is another section that Claire can reach and Leon can't.

• warehouse room

Collect the Grenade Rounds and a quiver of Bow Gun Bolts before going back up the ladder. Get the lift down into the Elevator Hallway and walk along the hall to the next room. On your way, pick up the Map of the Sewer Area hanging on the wall. Exit to the Passage to the Giant Fan.

• passage to giant fan

Head to the left past the ladder to the ledge and collect the case of Flame Rounds, then use them to kill the spiders. When the battle's over, take the path to the left and leave via the metal sewer door.

• waterfall room

Run past the spiders and climb up to the ledge to the next room. This is the Bridge Room. Annette Birkin appears and explains what happened to her husband William Birkin and why he's after Sherry. After this, she departs. Go over to the Oil Pressure Data Transmitter and use the Valve Handle on it to lower the bridge. Head over the bridge and collect the two Green Herbs, the case of Flame Rounds and the Ink Ribbon near to the typewriter. Come back over the bridge and before you leave the room, raise the bridge back up to the higher level.

• alligator tunnel

When you get to the tunnel, run to the end to see Sherry unconscious on the floor. As you approach, an alligator attacks. Go back to the door where you entered and look for the control panel on the left hand side. When you activate it, a gas cylinder drops to the ground. Wait a few moments and step back as the alligator approaches. When it



gets to the cylinder it picks it up in its mouth. Shoot the gas bottle to blow its head off.

Go to the back of the tunnel and operate the electric lock on the wall to open up the door. Enter the garbage room and collect the Ink Ribbon from the right side of the room and the Wolf Medal over the back right of the room. Go back to Sherry and she awakens. Exit and climb the ladder at the back and re-enter the Bridge Room. Continue along the metal passage and into the room with the corpse. Pick up the Eagle Medal and the Sewer Management Diary then exit to the Waterfall Room.

• stopping the waterfall

On the right of the waterfall is a Clearance Identification Device. Insert both the medals into the device to turn the waterfall off. The water from the sewage area drains away, allowing access to the wooden catwalk. Proceed to the Sky Tram Room One. Go over to the ride side of the Tram and operate the Power Console. This lets you get into the tram via the doors on the left side.

• vacant factory basement one

Ride the tram to the Sky Tram Room Two and get off. To your left is a Flare Gun, which can be activated by using your lighter. This lights the room, enabling you to see the location of the Weapon Box Key. Collect the key and leave to the room named Y-Shaped Branch One.

You encounter four zombies who are all wandering around. Take your time and walk round the four corners of the room, then go to the end of the left branch to find the Spark Shot. The right branch has a door that leads to the second Y-Shaped Branch Room. Off to the right branch you find two Green Herbs. When you get to the end of the left branch, you discover a ladder leading to the Factory Save Room, which is located on the first floor of the vacant factory

• vacant factory first floor

In the left of the room, collect a case of Flame Rounds and some Grenade Rounds. Look in the cabinet to the left of the door to find a First Aid Spray.

• transport room one

Next to the fallen barrels you find a box of Hand Gun Bullets and a Map of the Factory Area on the wall. Enter the transport at the far end of the room, then run to the back of the room to pick up the Control Panel Key. Back outside use the Key on the Control Panel to lower the transport to Laboratory Basement Four, Transport Room Two. As you descend, Sherry complains about pains in her stomach and drops to the floor unconscious. Exit back out the door and go round the transport. The fully-mutated William Birkin attacks. Don't get too close or he cuts you down with his claws. Go back into the transport and a cut scene starts.

• laboratory b4

As you arrive in this area, Claire automatically carries Sherry to the nearby Security Room.

• security room

On the refrigerator you find a Green Herb, a case of Flame Rounds in the lockers and a case of Acid Rounds on the table next to the lockers. There's an Ink Ribbon near the typewriter.

Leave the Security Room and head to the hallway on the far left, taking you to the main shaft containing the main Breaker System for the whole building. When you go back to the Transport Room Two, you need to deal with five skinless zombies. Follow the corridor with the red coloured guide lights and continue it into the left passage. Go through the door at the very end of this room.

• tentacle room

To kill the tentacles, shoot a Flame Round into the shaft. In the locker to the right of the door you find some Bow Gun Bolts and a file named Lab Security lies to the right of the flickering computer monitor. Use the computer to turn the BOW Sprinkler System on. On the couch next the beds is another file named User Registration and some Blue Herbs. Climb through the ventilation shaft from where the tentacles hung.

• tentacle room two

Kill the Lickers. There are Grenades in the metal closet at the back of the room. Pick up the Ink Ribbon on the table. Leave for the left corridor, head back to the Main Shaft Room and take the



corridor with the blue-coloured lights. Head off to the right passage and enter the Cold Room at the back of the corridor.

• cold room

You find a Fuse Case on the shelf in the back corner of the room - use it on the middle computer terminal. This turns it into the Main Fuse, which can now be used on the Breaker System in the Main Shaft. Collect the First Aid Spray from the shelf opposite the terminal. Now go to the Main Shaft and use the Main Fuse. This brings power back to some of the rooms and operates some electronic doors. One of the newly-powered doors is located in the left corridor, so head there. Activate the shutter door by operating the switch on the wall. In the room kill the two Plant Creatures - see a door leading to the room with the ladder to B5. Go through and kill another Plant Creature, then descend the ladder to reach Laboratory B5.

• laboratory b5 evacuation gate room

Kill two Lickers and a third drops from the ceiling.

Use your Flame Rounds. You should find three Green Herbs on the floor. Head through the door into the Control Centre. Collect the Map of the Lab sat on the main control panel to the left, below the video screens. You find and item box here. Head to the area outside the Giant Moth Room and go through the big metal doors to the P-4 Laboratory

• P-4 Laboratory

This room is divided into three sections. The doors are operated by motion sensors. The locker in the first section of the room is opened with the Weapon Locker Key. Inside you find two cases of Grenade Rounds. The Lab Card Key is on the table and note the Vaccine Synthesis Machine you need later. With all this done, go to the area outside the Giant Moth Room. Annette appears along with William Birkin. Run to the corridor after Annette. You get a file called Vaccine Synthesis, telling you how to make the Antigen to heal Sherry. The evacuation alarm rings - go through into the Giant Moth Room.

• Giant Moth Room

Use the Lab Card Key. Use Flame Rounds on the Giant Moth. Log onto the computer by signing on as 'GUEST' to register your fingerprint. Go outside and climb the ladder to Laboratory B4 level. As you walk past the monitors you spot Leon.

• Laboratory B4

Go to the right corridor and open the shutter door. This reveals another door, but don't enter yet. Instead use the Lab Card Key to enter the door to the left of the shutter door and kill the five zombies. Find the Vaccine Cartridge on the hospital bed. Flick the switch to put the lights on and use the Vaccine Cartridge on the VAM machine in the centre of the room. Go over to the VAM System Controller at the back of the room and switch it on. The Vaccine Cartridge becomes a Bas Vaccine and you can collect it again. On the way out from the room, pick up the Mo disk beside the system controller and the case of Grenades on the shelf left of the door.

Go back down to Laboratory P-4 and use the base vaccine on the Vaccine Synthesis Machine. When you get to the machine you can create the complete vaccine

• Evacuation

You now have a cure for Sherry. Run to the Evacuation Gate Room and use the MO disk you picked up on the control panel. Head down the pathway, behind this door and enter the Transport Elevator Room.

• Transport Elevator Room

As you enter, a counter counts down giving you just five minutes. Press the button to the right of the elevator platform to activate the lift. While you are waiting for the lift to descend, a mutated William Birkin drops from the ceiling. Kill him quickly - take too long he transforms into a hideous beast. Get on the lift and go down to the Escape Train. As you run forward, the final cut scene kicks in; you've finished Claire's game.

Leon's Route

• City Area

Turn and run, avoiding the zombies, until you arrive at the Gun Shop. When the cut scene ends, explore the shop for two boxes of Hand Gun Bullets. One's under the main counter and the second's under the side counter on top of the crates. Zombies smash through the shop window and set about the shop owner. Run behind the counter and use it as cover while you kill them. Collect the Shotgun from behind the corpse, then leave by the back door and run up the alleyway. You see zombies in the locked basketball court. Shoot them, then continue along the path until you reach the van. Search the back of the van for a box of Hand Gun Bullets then position yourself to shoot zombies breaking out of the basketball court. Go through the courts and out the other side. This brings you to an area with a metal gantry.

Go up the stairs and along the gantry and down the stairs at the far end. At the bottom collect the box of Hand Gun Bullets between the metal bins. Scramble over the skip, run past the four zombies and climb onto the bus. In the duffel bag there's another box of Hand Gun Bullets. Shoot the two zombies on the bus, then exit from the vehicle via the doors at the far end. Now run past the five zombies outside and head for the gate to the police station.

• Police Station

Go down the stairs and head through the door at the back on the left. You meet a wounded copper who gives you his Blue Card Key. Use this on the computer terminal in the Main Hall to unlock two other doors. Collect the Hand Gun Bullets and the Ink Ribbon, go to Reception Area One through the door on the left. You find an Item Box and a Police Memorandum file. Leave via the door at the back and you see a Licker.

You have now entered the Circuit Box Hall One, this contains a Circuit Box and a Green Herb. A Licker drops; draw your Shotgun and aim low to blow this thing to pieces. Continue along the Hallway through the wooden doors into another Hallway with boarded-up windows. Go through the next door you see.



You're now inside the Briefing Room, so look around and collect the file from the table and use the lighter on the Fireplace to collect the Red Jewel. You can also find another box of Bullets at the back of the rear room.

Go back into the Hallway to the room on the right with the staircase. Grab the two Green Herbs at the foot of the Dark Room door. There's an Ink Ribbon on the table. Head up the stairs nearby and follow the Hallway along at the top. This leads to a room with three statues. Push the right grey statue onto the left pressure plate and do the same to the brown statue onto the right pressure plate. You hear a clicking and the middle statue reveals another Red Jewel. Exit using the nearby door, leading you to the Hallway to the STARS Office. When inside collect the First Aid Spray, the Shotgun, the Chris's Diary File and the Unicorn Medal. Claire arrives.

Go to the Main Hall and use your Unicorn Medal on the Centre Statue for a key. Head through the door at the front right and you're in Reception Area Two. Collect the Green Herb next to the vending machine and head for the big blue doors. You're inside the Fan room. Collect the Ink Ribbon from the front table in the room and a box of Hand Gun Bullets on the dead body in the corner of the room at the back. By the door near the staircase on the east, you find two Green Herbs.

Go into the Office to find a locked safe. The code is 2236 (from the Police Memorandum). Inside is a case of Shotgun Shells and a map of the police station. Exit and go to the west side of the police station and enter through the metal door back in Circuit Box Hall One. You're in the Messy File Room.

• Messy File Room

Use the Key. Inside is a file on the shelf next to the copy machine and an Ink Ribbon in the supply cabinet. Push the stepladder at the end of the metal shelf, up against the supply cabinet. Look on the top of the cabinet to find a Crank.

• Reception Area Three

Head forward and use the Key again to open the door leading to Reception Area Three. You see five zombies, so shoot them all. You find a box of Hand Gun Bullets at the end of the hallway in the chest. In the desk drawer is a Small Key and some Hand Gun Parts that can be combined with your current pistol to make it automatic.

• Library

Head through the door nearby and go up the staircase and along the balcony around to the left. As you walk along you fall through the floor into the room below. You find a box on the wall and a Power Switch that opens a secret passage leading back to the Main Hall. Head down the passage and operate the panel on the bookcase at the end. This enables you to move the cases from left to right, so move the next book rack to the right to open a box on the wall in the secret section and reveal a Bishop Plug. There's a Red Herb on the table under the balcony. With everything completed, leave the room via the main doors at the end.

Continue round the hallway ledge until you come to the ladder box. Activate it and a ladder drops down to the first floor. You can use this to gain access between the two floors more easily, then continue round and enter the Waiting Room.

• Waiting Room

There's a file on the desk next to the typewriter and a Small Key on the window ledge. There's an Ink Ribbon on the other side of the typewriter. Head through the next set of doors and shoot the two zombies in the Helicopter Hallway - you can't get past the wreckage yet, so go to the Bird Hallway. As you head up the corridor, shoot the birds and check the corpse for Hand Gun Bullets, then unlock the door to the East Staircase. You find a Green Herb outside the stairs.

• City Area

Proceed forward and head for the Helicopter Rooftop. When you get there, climb down the metal stairs to the side and run past the four zombies to the Small Work Area. In the back of the area you find a box of Hand Gun Bullets, an Ink Ribbon and a Valve Handle. Don't enter the door on the right, as you're attacked by two waiting zombies. Go back to the Helicopter Rooftop and head behind the metal fence. Use the Valve Handle on the Water Pressure Valve to extinguish the fire on the crashed Helicopter, then come back round from behind the fence and go over to the wreckage and search it to find a box of Bullets for your Hand Gun.

• Police Station

Run past the zombies and re-enter the Helicopter

Hallway and go to the back door. You're in the Red Statue Room and you need the two Red Jewels. There's a Key on the crate in front of the left statue. To solve the puzzle, put a Red Jewel in each of the two side statues. This causes the centre statue to open and reveal the King Plug. Pick up the Shotgun Shells amongst the boxes on the floor to the left. Now you have the new key, go back to the other side of the station and down the stairs to the first floor and go the right hand side of the back Hallway and enter the Locker Room.

● Locker room

Shoot the five zombies. There's a case of Shotgun Shells in the locker on the wall by the door. On the other side of the wall of lockers is a drawer with Film 'A' inside.

Leave through the other door to bring you out in the room with the wounded copper again. Pick up the Green Herb and turn to see the cop in the office. If you try to approach him, he turns into a zombie, so shoot him straight away and collect the next key off of the desk. On the desk on the far side of the room there's a file saying Memo to Leon. On the lockers is a box of Hand Gun Bullets, so collect them as well and exit out to the Main Hall.

● Boarded-up Hallway

Head to the Reception Area Two and head out the door at the back. This takes you into the Boarded-Up Hallway. Collect the Red Herb and enter the door on the right near the end to take you into the Interrogation View Room, to find a Small Key on the table.

● Interrogation room

Head back into the Hallway and enter the grey door using the key from the Red Jewel Statue Room. Look on the shelf for the Rook Plug, and Cord is on the table as well as some First Aid Spray. A Licker bursts from the two-way mirror - run past or shoot him then leave the room. Head for the basement. Go down the staircase on the east side and enter the Fan Room again, but use one of the keys to unlock the door and exit through it. You're in Circuit Box Hall Two. Use the wire from the Interrogation Room on the Circuit Box to make the metal shutters to drop and prevent any zombies from outside entering the hallway. Collect the Green Herb from the room and head down the stairs to Police Station Basement One.

● Police station basement one

At the bottom of the stairs you dogs barking; go through the Main Tunnel until you come to the T-junction and kill the barking animals that leap out at you. Once they are dead, enter the big doors into the Power Room.

● Power room

Pick the Green Herb up to your left and go round the centre machinery and collect the Map of the Police Station B1. Go to the Reserve Power Control Panel and set the switches in the following order, UP, DOWN, UP, DOWN, UP. This powers the Card Reader outside the Armoury.

Exit out and head through the dirty metal door to the metal path. There's a Red Herb on the floor near the door. When you're jumped by two more dogs, run to the end and drop down the manhole. The dogs won't follow, but when you stick your head out again, both dogs are in front.

● Under construction passageway

At the bottom of the manhole you're in the Under Construction Passageway. Go through the door on the left and save, then on your way out, pick up the Ink Ribbon near the typewriter. Head back to the Main Tunnel of Basement.

● Police station basement one

Head to the Parking Garage at the far end of the tunnel. You meet Ada. Help her push the SWAT van out of the way. You should be able to access to the Cell Block Entrance Hallway.

● Cell block entrance hallway

In front of the metal gate at the end of the hall you find a table with Hand Gun Bullets on it. Go through the metal gate and enter in the main Cell Block. You find a Green Herb and a Blue Herb in the first empty cell. Talk to Ben in the last cell. Collect the Manhole Opener off of the shelf. With this in hand, enter the other door in the Cell Block Entrance Hallway. This takes you to the kennels, where at the end you find a Red Herb. The dogs that you passed break out and attack. Now enter the kennel and collect the Blue Herb, then use the Manhole Key on the cover and open it to drop down into the sewers.

● Sewage disposal

Go down the ladder and run past the two Giant Spiders. Climb the ladder at the end of the tunnel and into the Store Room on the left of the Hallway. You find and Item Bow, a typewriter and a Blue Herb. Leave and go into the room with the big metal door, to the left of the Store Room. Leave the room and meet Ada again. Lift her up to a ventilation shaft and she climbs through into the Cesspool room. You gain control of her. Leave the Cesspool area and head for the Catwalk and run past the two dogs and into the next room.

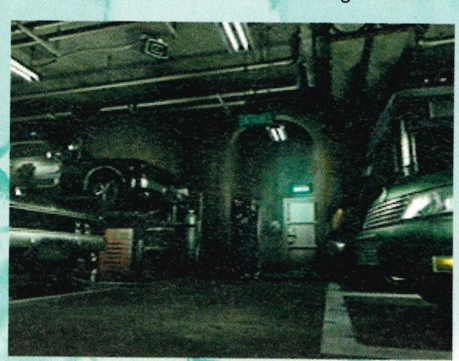
● Crate puzzle room

You're in a room with three crates in an empty pool area and a platform on the far side of the room. Go down into the pool area and push all the crates up against the back wall, until they're all in a line. Come back up the stairs and flick the lever on the control panel at the side. This fills the pool with water. Head over to the crates at the back of the room. Cross them to the platform on the other side and collect the key, then turn and come back out of the room while grabbing the map on the way out. On the Catwalk, run to the area with the lift and ride it down to the dead end. Here you can collect the case of Shotgun Shells. Get the lift back up and return to the Cesspool Room. When cut the scene stops, you gain control of Leon again, so turn and go back to the Main Tunnel of the Basement.

Back in the tunnel head to the Autopsy Room. Use the new Key you've got unlock the door and gain entrance. Collect the Red Card Key in the locker at the far end of the room on the left. Make sure you've lots of ammo, because as you try to leave, five zombies come to life and attack. Head to the Armoury.

● The armoury

Use the Red Card Key in the Card Reader. Once in the room, look to the left to find Shotgun Shells and Hand Gun Bullets. On the right you find Gun Bullets. At the end of the room is a Sub-Machine Gun and a Side Pack in the left locker. Head back to Circuit Box Hall Two



● Police station

Under the stairs is a door opened with your key. Inside is living quarters. In the sleeping area you find a Magnum Gun, the Watchmen's Diary and a case of Shotgun Shells in the locker. Leave the room and go up the stairs into the Boarded-Up Hallway and enter the green door using another of your keys. This is the Press Room.

● Press room

Film 'B' is on the table. Go to the back of the room and light the furnace using your lighter. Turn the three wall statues in the following order; 12, 13, 11. When all three are lit, a Golden Cog Wheel drops from the painting. Head to the Gear Room, but make sure you still have the Crank Handle.

● Gear room

This is on the third floor - get there through the Library staircase. This takes you to the Main Hallway ledge on the third floor and the door to the Gear Room is here. When you finally enter the room, use the Crank on the square opening on the back wall. This lower a wooden staircase you can climb to get to the attic. Use the Gold Cog on the machinery there, to open up the door on the right. In there you find the Knight Plug. This also heads to an old dust chute you need to slide down to bring you out at the Cell Block Entrance Hallway. When the cut scene finishes, re-enter the Cell Block and go to Ben. He gives you a file. Leave the Cell Block and go back to the kennels and down through the manhole that's in the first kennel, back past the two Giant Spiders and into the Store Room. Save your game and load up with weapons. Exit the room and go through the metal doors once again. This leads to a H-shaped room.

● H-shaped room

You now need to fight the creature that killed Ben. You see it mutate into a Giant Slug and head towards you. Start off using the Sub-Machine Gun, then the Shotgun and shoot the small critters that jump up and cling to you. When you kill this monstrosity, head over to the other door in the room and use the four chest plugs on it. Take the stairs down into the Sewer Basement one and you bump into Ada. She now escorts you for a while. Leave the sewer area, via the main doors and head to the drainage room. As you go, you need to climb up onto the ledge to get to Control Room Two, make sure you collect the two Blue Herbs on your way.

● Control room two

At the far end of the room you find an Ink Ribbon next to the typewriter, and a file named Sewer Management Fax on the table along with Hand Gun Bullets on the shelf. Now push the set of large lockers up against the right wall to discover a passage that leads to a Secret Warehouse. Head into it.

● Sewer B2: Secret warehouse

Use your light on the lamp hanging on the wall. There's a Clip for the Magnum on the shelf. Go into the second part of the room and light another lamp. You see the Shotgun Shells. Go back to the Control Room Two. Before you get the lift down, collect the First Aid Spray.

● Elevator hallway

At the bottom you're in the Elevator Hallway and a mysterious women shoots at you and Ada, wounding Leon. You now get control of Ada and

set off in pursuit of her. As you go down through the passage, collect the Map of the Sewer Area on the wall next to the exit to the Giant Fan.

• path to giant fan

Run past two Giant Spiders on the left. When you've past them, climb the ladder into the bug-infested tunnel. Run through here as fast as you can and then descend the ladder at the end.

• bridge room

In the room you is the women that shot at you and Leon. At the back of the room, climb down another ladder and enter the Garbage Room. When the cut scene finishes you regain control of Leon. Head for the Passage to the Giant Fan and go to the left, past the ladder and on to the ledge. Here you find Shotgun Shells and a Wolf Medal. Pump the spiders full of lead. Now take the exit through the metal sewer door. You can't climb through the bug-infested tunnel because the ventilation fan is spinning too fast.

• waterfall room

You're now in the Waterfall Room with two Giant Spiders. Run past them and climb onto the ledge to get to the next room. This is the next part of the Bridge Room. Use the Valve Handle on the Pressure Data Transmitter to lower the bridge, then cross and collect the two Green Herbs, the Shotgun Shells and the Ink Ribbon. Just before you exit the room, turn the Valve Handle to raise the bridge again.

• alligator tunnel

When you reach the Tunnel you see Ada at the end, but as you approach, an alligator rises from the water attacks. Go back to the door you entered and activate the control panel on the wall. A Gas Cylinder drops to the ground. Wait until the alligator approaches and it lifts the cylinder in its mouth. Shoot the gas bottle and it explodes. Go to the end of the tunnel and activate the electric lock on the wall to open a door. Enter and you're in the Garbage Room. Collect the items and watch the cut scene. Afterwards, go along the metal walkway to the Small Room with the dead body. Collect the Eagle Medal and the Sewer Management Diary, then leave to the Waterfall Room.

• stopping the waterfall

A Clearance Identification Device is situated on the right side of the room. Insert the Wolf and Eagle Medals into the device to stop the water flowing. This also drains the sewage area as well. You now have access across the wooden catwalk. Head for the Sky Tram Room One. When you arrive there, go over to the right side of the Tram and activate the Power Console. This enables you to open the doors on the left side.

• vacant factory basement one

Travel on the Tram to Sky Tram Room Two. To the left is a Flare Gun, activated with your lighter to light the room, revealing the Weapon Box Key. Collect the Key and exit to the Y-Shaped Branch Room One. Walk up the left side of the room, to find Shotgun Parts, then take the right hand side of the branch and go through the door. This brings you into the second Y-Shaped Branch Room. Take the branch off to the right. This takes you to two Green Herbs. If you take the left branch, you come to a ladder. Climb up this and enter into the Factory Save Room, situated on the first floor of the Vacant Factory.

• vacant factory first floor

In the corner of the room are Shotgun Shells and a Magnum Bullets, and some First Aid Spray in the cabinet. There's an Ink Ribbon next to the typewriter.

• transport room one

There's a box of Hand Gun Bullets next to the barrels in the back of the room, and the Map of the Factory hanging on the wall. At the far end of the room, get on the transport and get the Control Panel Key, come back off the transport and use the key on the Control Panel. This activates the Transport and lowers it down into Laboratory B4, Transport Room Two. As you descend, Ada is struck down. The mutated William Birkin attacks. Use the custom Shotgun and stay away from his sharp claws. At the bottom in Laboratory Room B4, Claire automatically carries Sherry to the Security Room.

• security room

On top of the refrigerator is a Green Herb, and a case of Shotgun Shells in the lockers at the rear end of the room. A Clip of Magnum Bullets is on the table along with an Ink Ribbon next to the typewriter. Leave the Security Room and go to the left hallway. This leads to the Main Shaft and the Main Breaker System for the entire building, but remember on your return to the Transport Room Two you face five skinless zombies. Proceed down the corridor with the red coloured lights and then into the left corridor and up to the door at the end.

• tentacle room

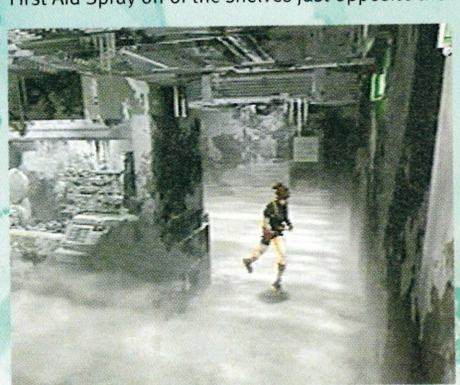
You're in a room with tentacles hanging down from the ventilation shaft. Open the locker on the right for a Flame-thrower and put it to good use in killing the tentacles. Next to the flickering computer monitor, you find a file named Lab Security Manual. Use the computer to switch on the Anti-BOW Sprinkler System. You discover a file on the couch named User Registration and some Blue Herbs at the side of the beds. Now climb up through the ventilation shaft from where the tentacles hung.

• tentacle room two

When you drop down from the shaft, you meet two Lickers. Open the metal closet at the back of the room to find two cases of Shotgun Shells, then fight the Lickers. Head out of the door and you find yourself back in the left corridor. Head along it until you come back out in the Main Shaft Room, then take the corridor with the blue-coloured lights off to the right and enter the door at the end.

• cold room

Inside the Cold Room is a Fuse Case on the shelf at the back of the room. Use it on the middle computer terminal to the right of the shelves to turn it into the Main Fuse, which you can use on the Breaker System in the Main Shaft. As you head back to this section, remember to collect the First Aid Spray off of the shelves just opposite the terminal. Once you get back to the Main Shaft, use the Main Fuse to partly power sections of the Laboratories and some of the electronic doors. One of these is the door up the left corridor, so head to it. Activate the switch on the wall next to the shutter door and enter. On the other side you're confronted by two Plant Creatures which are easily defeated using the Flame-thrower. A door leads into the next room with a ladder to B5. Head through here and destroy the single Plant Creature and get the ladder down to B5.



• laboratory b5 evacuation gate room

As you enter the room you need to tackle the three Lickers in the area, so use your Flame-thrower to burn them. There's three Green Herbs on the floor in the wider part of the room. Go through into the next room and the Control Centre. Pick up the map on the side by the main control panel below the video screens. Now proceed to the area outside of the Giant Moth Room and go through the metal doors into P-4 Laboratory.

• p-4 laboratory

This is one large room with three sections. There are five zombies that are roaming the area, so be on your guard. In the first part of the room there's a Weapons Locker that can be opened with the respective Key. You find parts to add to your Magnum. In the second and largest section, you need the Lab Card Key. It's on the white table. Leave and head to the Giant Moth Room.

• giant moth room

Use the Lab Card Key to unlock the door. Toast the Giant Moth hanging on the back wall and the small insects on the computers. Log on to the network. Enter your user name as 'GUEST' and let the computer register your fingerprint. Now leave the room and go back up the ladder into Laboratory B4 level.

• laboratory b4

Go to the right corridor and open the shutter door. You discover another door, but instead use the Lab Card Key to open the door immediately to the left of shutter door and kill the zombies. On the bed to the left is First Aid Spray. Turn the lights on using the switch on the wall to see the MO disk (second bed round the corner). As you leave, pick up the Clip of Magnum Bullets from near the first bed.

• evacuation

Evacuate the Umbrella Laboratories by running to the Evacuation Gate Room past the Control Centre. Use the MO disk on the Control Panel near the big door and save your game if you haven't done so for a while. With this done, continue down the corridor and enter the Transport Elevator Room.

• transport elevator room

As you enter the room a counter starts, giving you five minutes to get out. Press the button on the right of the platform elevator to activate the transport elevator. At this point the mutated form of William Birkin drops from the ceiling and attacks. Kill him as quickly as possible or he turns into another mutated form and becomes twice as hard to kill. Use everything you've got to defeat him, but stay a safe distance from his razor-sharp claws. When you finally kill him, the elevator arrives. Jump on and ride it down to the Escape Train. Run forward and the final cut scene kicks in and you've finished Leon's game.

Player's Guide

Deathtrap Dungeon

Spire One

Enter through the doors at the end of the bridge and move forward. Time your run to avoid the fireballs. The loose floor crumbles away and you fall.

Spire Two

Open the gate to the room with the cage and kill the orc, then jump onto the pillar on the left of the wall. Leap over to the platform on the right to collect the War Pig. Repeat on the right wall to pick up the Razorspell. Walk over to the gate on the left and open it, then walk down the ramp to open the portcullis. Follow the path left or right and kill the orcs before flicking the switch on the wall.

Go to the alcove and flick the second lever, lowering a lift. Ride it to the platform, then head to the left and flick a grey lever. Follow the platform and collect the Arc Of Power, and take the lift back down. Go back to the cage room and kill a second orc, before picking up a Health Orb.

Go to your left and you find the save symbol. Back at the brickwork lift, catch a ride up then leap across to the platform. Jump right and flick the switch to activate a bridge and collect the Fireballs at the end. Back on the lift, descend down then climb the rocks by the arrow opposite the entrance. Reach the ledge and slash the imps on top. Head round the pit and collect the Bomb Shots. Find the next switch and flick it to kill the orc below and wait for the lift to raise. Once on the lift, descend and progress along the corridor to find a Health Potion. Head back to the entrance and watch it close, then go back to the place where the potion was. Walk past the sliding wall on the right of you and look for the final switch. When you've activated it, it raises a cage back in the main room.

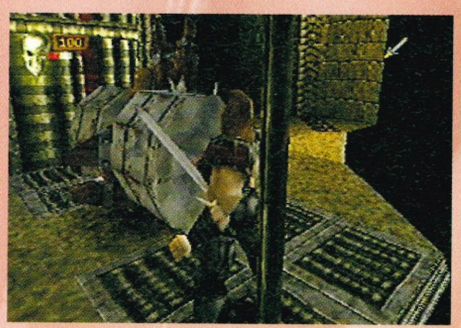
Follow the passage to the right to open the sliding wall and kill the orc before heading back to the lift. Allow the lift to take you back up and descend down from the ledge and rocks before saving the game for a second time. Walk back to the brickwork lift and take it back to the main room. Kill the orc. Flick another switch in the middle of the room to unlock a stairway and reveal a gate. Up the stairs and through the gate, collect the Flamelance, then open the wall and activate the next switch to unlock the portcullis near the lift. Go back to the portcullis and enter to discover a secret area with a chest. Now you're back in the main room. Head up the lift and leap onto the moving platform, then wait for the next moving platform to take you to the next lift. Repeat the procedure until you reach the top, then use your Flamelance to wipe out the spiders. Unlock the gate and kill the two orcs before stepping onto the teleport to finish the level.

Spire Three

Avoid the two wheeled knackers and open the portcullis on the far side of the centre pillar. Ride the lift and leap onto the next elevator. Climb again, but stand on the sides to avoid the flames. Leap onto the ledge, go through the portcullis and press Square to activate the platform and go over to the next portcullis. Open it and ride down on the lift, then collect the Bomb Shots from the corner of the room and throw one at the 'droid. Head around the ledge and up the ramp to find a Skull - save your game.

Come back down the ramp and turn right, then take the elevator and descend onto the block then off its side. Walk round the building and flick the two switches to lower blocks into the fire pit. Head over the low block and up the newly-discovered stairs. At the top take the lift up and avoid the hole appearing when you pull the lever which raises the Venom Sword. Collect the sword to unlock a door somewhere else.

Get the lift, go back down the stairs and activate the lock at the far end, allowing you to reach the lift and the exit. Head back up the ramp and find the save Skull. Go to the next ramp, turn right and get the next lift up to open a secret room before collecting the contents of the chest. These are a Coin, Bomb Shots and a Health Potion. Flick the switch before taking the elevator back down to the ramp. Follow the ramp to the right and grab the next lift up. At the top you see a see-saw and two imps operating the flame traps blocking your exit. To kill them and open the exit, pull the two floor levers and activate more fire traps. Head out.



Spire Four

Find the Skull and save, then open the gate nearby. Look out for the warrior priestesses advancing upon you. Time your run well to avoid the swinging axes, and they take out the attackers for you. At the far end, open the gate and enter a large chamber with crushers - don't stand on the light tiles. Defeat the green snake women. Try luring them into the crushers or activate a teleport in an opened alcove to advance across the room more quickly.

Kill them and the exit opens to reveal a locked gate. When you've opened it be ready to strike down more priestesses. Head off to your left and grab the elevator up to the next platform. Walk round the outside, killing anything that blocks your path, until you find the switch; flick it. Go back to the lift and head down. At the bottom, go into the room with the pillars and kill attacking priestesses. In the chest at the far end you find a Silver Sword. Unlock the blue panel to the left of the exit and head down a dark corridor. Further along you find a switch; flick this to activate another gate in the main room. Enter through the new gate and collect the Health Potions, then flick the yellow switch to open the exit.

Labyrinth One

Save the game, then enter the large room. This level's against the clock; once the chimes have struck six times, a batch of minotaurs are released. You don't have to explore the entire level, but if you're brave enough, the rewards are spells and charms. Go down the ramp on the right and avoid the fireballs. Open the door and time your run to dodge the fireballs again, then enter the passage. Opening the first door on your left gives a Warding Spell and two imps. Open the portcullis on the right and operate the wheel.

At the end of the passageway, open the gate and take out the imps. Loot the chest and return to your starting point and go down the opposite ramp, past the now-disabled flames. Flick the switch to unlock a cell door, then kill the minotaur before flicking the switch in the cell. This opens up the end of the passageway, revealing a Rocket Launcher Shot. Flick the next switch to unlock a second cell door containing another minotaur; kill him to collect a Bomb Shot. Enter through the opposite archway and drop into a cave. Kill another minotaur before opening the chest to collect a Health Potion. Next, flick the switch located on the centre pillar to raise the floor in the main room. Flick the switch near where you dropped in to teleport back up.

Back in the main room, jump onto the raised floor to reach the window on the right. As you follow the passageway left, collect the Health Potion and be ready to leap across the crumbling floor just after the archway. At the end, climb the wall to reach and activate the switch, then pass back by the crumbling floor and leap to the left to collect the Blunderbuss Shot, but keep an eye out for the imp. Leap over the gap to the opposite side and walk tightly against the wall to avoid the flames. Hack and slash your way through the imps after you try the door. When they're dead and the doors are open, enter, kill more imps and take the wooden lift up to pick up a Health Potion.



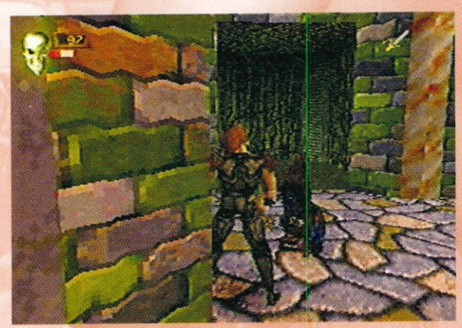
The next lift up takes you to three Health Potions, but again they're guarded by imps. Head back down and find the wooden bridge. When you do, jump onto the stone lift and ride it to the next ledge. Walk along until you come to a yellow switch; flick it to switch the upper ledge around. Go back to the lift and descend, but watch out for further imps throwing knifes. Cross the wooden bridge and grab a ride up in the next stone lift. At the top, open the bright wall on the right to reveal a hidden Warhammer, but watch out for the loose floor under you.

At the end of the passageway you emerge by the upper ledge that's been moved around. You now need to leap over to the ledge and, at the other end, flick a switch to swing it back again.

This lets you to collect the Blunderbuss. Come back past the yellow switch and the sliding wall to the wooden lift and grab a ride down. Go back past the wooden bridge and follow it left round the corner, but ignore the switch on the wall. Go down the passageway to collect the Firethrower Ammo; at the end is a golden lock. Go through the door on your left and press the dark wall on your right to activate the upper wall. Ascend and flick another yellow switch, then drop back down and go through the grey doors. Flick the next yellow switch to open the wall and slide a platform into the main room. Go back to the wooden bridge and leap across to the ledge on your left, then collect the gold key in the alcove. Now head back to the gold lock, tackling the minotaurs from behind the sliding wall. Open the lock and leave.

Labyrinth two

Kill the imp and save. Open the chest to collect a Blunderbuss Shot and Health Potion, then go through the door on the left and do a full turn to kill dagger-throwing imps. Flick the switch in the room on the right to open a door on the left. Kill the imps, then flick the gold switch to lift the middle door outside. Go through and collect the gold key and open the gold door to collect the Health Potions and a Silver Sword. Open the door and kill the minotaur, then open the following door, avoiding the loose floor. Go to the right and into the passage to collect another Health Potion before leaping up and flicking the switch. Leap over the loose floor and flick the next switch, then turn and collect the Coin before cutting down the imp and flicking another switch.



On entering the next large chamber, leap over onto the sliding platforms to reach the ledge on the far side. This way you avoid the missiles triggered if you try to cross the bridge. Kill the minotaur and head right to kill imps appearing from sliding panels. Enter the alcoves to pick up some useful extras, then leap up at the end of the passage to flick a switch. Go back past the entrance and take the passage to your left and open the chest on the left to collect Blunderbuss Shots and a Bomb Shot. Go back down the passageway and off to the left and leap up to flick a switch to activate the crumbling floor close by. Leg it to the other side and towards the edge of the hole to reach a platform with Health Potions. Drop from the platform and enter through the door to kill the imps, then find the switch and activate it to open a portcullis blocking your path to a teleport room. Collect the items available before teleporting back upstairs and the entrance to the bridge room, then jump back over the crumbling floor and return to the level starting position. Save again.

Go back to the bridge room and leap over the sliding platforms on the left to reach the ledge and flick the switch. Enter and proceed along the new passage until you come to a wooden lift. This takes you to the teleport. Open the sliding wall, step back to avoid the spikes that rise. Go left and open another sliding wall for a treasure room. Inside there's a Warding Spell - use it to destroy the zombie appearing in the doorway. In the remaining chests are a Silver Key and Crowns. Exit and proceed down the passage, turning left onto the bridge. Half way across, four flame 'droids appear in the corners of the room. Turn and shoot the two behind you, then leap onto the ledges to collect Health Potions before flicking the relevant switches. This causes two platforms to descend from the ceiling. Head back onto the bridge and leap to the platform on the left; shoot the 'droid. Open the portcullis and the red key door for a secret chest with power-ups and weapons. Leave and proceed along the passageway to a room with a crate. Open the right wall and enter to collect Firethrower Ammo and flick a switch. Go back to the bridge and over to the opposite platform, shooting the remaining 'droid before going through the portcullis. As you go up the passageway, kill the zombie that creeps up behind you. Enter through the door on the right to flick a switch, opening another door. Enter into this room to flick a switch and collect the Firethrower Ammo. Go back to the bridge and leave through the door that was blocked by flames. Kill the zombie appearing from the sliding wall on the left. Open the portcullis and grab a ride on the lift to the next level.

Circus one

Flick the switch on the right to open the left door and enter. Inside, collect the Venom Sword and save. Turn round and kill the two Hydras, then go back to the main room and through the doors on the left for Fireballs and Health Potions. Proceed through the main doors at the end and you come out above the circus tents. Head to the doors opposite and drop down on the left to avoid the spikes. Flick the switch and collect Health Potions before using the teleport to take you back to the path.

Head back to the skull and save, then open the portcullis and stab the jester. Go through the next portcullis and drop down onto some Firefly Spells and Health Potions before teleporting back to the path. As you move forward, go through the unlocked door and head along the passageway killing jesters.

Open the next door and hack down the hydras before collecting the Venom Sword then go through the next door killing another hydra. Now turn around and go to the right to kill another hydra, then turn to your left and into the passage to kill another two. Continue along the passageway and turn to your left as the door opens. The floor in the next room is a loose one, so dash to the opposite door. Go through avoiding the War Pigs. Keep legging through the doors and corridors until you reach a door that can't be opened. Turn back, leaping the pit. Open the jack-in-the-box to collect a red key and some Starspells. Keep heading back until you reach the skull - save again.

Get back to the paths above the circus and open the door at the far end. Kill the jesters and clowns. Don't open the box as it's a booby trap. When you open the next door, use your Firefly to light up the passage and take out the jesters. Open the left box to collect some goodies and follow the passage through the brickwork section to the fork and turn to your right to collect some Health Potions. Head down the left fork and kill the Hydra, then open the final door to exit the level.

Circus two

Grab the lift down and go through the portcullis. Follow the passageway and turn right at the end. Follow the path until you come to the end then flick the switch to open the portcullis, moving to one side to avoid the knacker, and flick the switch located in the room. This unlocks a gate, so then proceed in and collect the Coins. Go round to where the knacker is. Continue along behind it and turn right to the portcullis. As the knacker goes left, make a dash into the room with the crates. Open right-hand for Antidote, Blunderbuss Shot and Health Potions before following the knacker again until you come to the alcove on the left containing a switch. Flick it as the knacker passes by, then run across through the raised portcullis before it drops down again. Go back into the original corridor and take the turn to your right and kill the two clowns. Once they're dead, continue along the path until you come to a door. Enter through the door and kill the clowns, then head over the open wall. Wait until the knacker goes down the left passage then flick the switch to trap it. Head off to the right again and turn the wheel at the end, then come back down the passage and turn right as the portcullis opens. Go straight forward through the sliding wall for a jack-in-the-box containing Health Potions and Fireballs, then turn round and go right through the portcullis and enter the next sliding wall for another secret crate full of freebies.



Turn around and proceed up the corridor, killing the clowns. At the end, open the door and follow the path along through the gate until you come to another door. Open this and enter to find another two doors. The left has a gold key lock on it, so take the door to your right and kill the two clowns. Through the next door, step to one side to avoid a Lightning Bolt fired by the high priestess, then use your Fireballs to kill her; try not to get involved in close combat or you could get poisoned. Collect the Arc of Power, Health Potion and the gold key, kill the second high priestess with Fireballs and collect the Health Potions.

Flick the switch to raise the curtains for another crate containing Fireballs. Flick the levers again to raise the curtains outside and reveal two secret crates. With everything collected, proceed back to the door with the gold lock on it and use the key to unlock it. Follow the path along and kill the clowns blocking your passage, then head off to the right and exit.

Circus three

At the junction with the skull, head right and go through the door. Kill the two hydras and open the grey gate at the far end. Continue along the passageway up and round till you reach the end and open the brown wall on the corner to get the red key. As the path continues, drop off the ledge and collect the Venom Sword then use it to defeat the hydra. Flick the switch to open the portcullis revealing a chest containing Firefly Spells, Starspell and Health Potion. From here, open the left grey gate near to your starting position for some hidden extras, but don't open any of the other gates because they all lead to more hydras. Go back to the junction with the skull and head

off to the elevator near the portcullis and grab a ride up. Kill the axe throwers before getting the next lift up and then drop down the hole to collect some power-ups, landing behind the portcullis.

Head left from the skull and proceed to the lift. Descend and unlock the red key door, then open the chest at the end. Open the gate at the side and enter the first battle arena of four. Kill all the clowns, go through the doorway and along the corridor to discover a chest with a Venom Sword and other items. Opening the next gate leads to the next arena, containing a crowd of hydras, so use your Venom Sword. Go through the next doorway and follow the path along to find yet another chest. Open the next gate and enter the third arena and meet the zombie axe throwers. Kill them all to open another door, leading down until you come to some Health potions. Enter the next gate and go into the fourth arena; use your War Pigs and Bombs to destroy the giant pit monster. If things get a bit heavy, take cover behind one of the few spiked pillars before launching your next attack. When it's dead the level is complete.

pit one

Kill the priestess and collect the items from the sides of the rooms. Unlock and open the wall in one of the dark alcoves for a secret stash, then go through the gate and take either passage to the same large chamber. Destroy the priestess and the high priestess and pick up the Fireballs and the Health Potions they leave behind. Activate the front of the altar to bring down a lift. Catch a ride up to the secret area containing Ankh of Vitality.



Head back down and leave via the gate, then turn to your left and open the wall to find Blunderbuss and ammo. Shoot the barrels to create a hole in the wall to reveal a switch. Flick the switch to raise the wall and offer you the chance to save the game. As the passageway goes of to the left, kill the priestess close to the door and then enter. Once inside, kill the next priestess and collect the coin at the alter. Proceed through the gate and kill the priestesses and collect the items from the alcove. Go back through the gate and enter the chapel via another gate. Head to the stone lift killing everything in your path and pick up all the items that are scattered on the left-hand side as well as the Warhammer tucked behind the pillar. Brace yourself as you're besieged by priestesses and a four-armed demon. Collect the Flamelance as flick the yellow switch to activate the wooden lift and exit the level.

pit two

Approach the gold key gate and the right gate opens leading to a lift. Descend and continue round to the right until you come to a room with some priestesses. Kill these and collect the items, then go over to the arch alcove and open the wall, leading to a wheel. Turn the wheel to deactivate the flame trap near the stone lift and cut down the priestesses. Head round the corner and near to the stone lift and flick the lever to raise the gate near the wooden lift. Exit the room and return to kill the priestesses. Grab the Health Potion and Blunderbuss from the chest, then open the walls to the left and right of the chest to collect more items. Leap onto the ledge and destroy the four-armed monster and ring the bell on the right before flicking the switch on the left.

Head back to the start and open the gate opposite and follow the corridor to the right. A priestess appears from the sliding wall on the corner; dispose of her and open the next corner wall to reveal a switch. Flick it before continuing down the ramp and climbing onto the ledge to the left to collect the Coins. Open the gate and kill the priestess then open the wall to the right and flick the lever. Over in the furthest corner you find some extra items - open the wall there to find a secret item.

Exit the room after killing the priestesses and turn to your left and head towards the open gate. Unlock the door to your right to find Coin and a chest, then climb up onto the ledge and save your game position. Once you've done that, go through the raised gate and open the door opposite the portcullis and kill the priestess then collect the Razorspell and Coin. Open the gate and kill the second priestess and collect the Health from the alcove. Enter the right doorway and open the next wall to the left of the entrance and collect the Silver Sword. Now flick the grey switch round the corner to open the silver portcullis.

Go to the entrance and kill the skeleton guards, then head forward and ring the bell to summon the high priestess elsewhere in the level. As you head along you come out by the first bell. Descend and look for the high priestess you summoned. When you come up against her, use your Anti-Magic Charm - pick up the red key she leaves behind and open the relevant portcullis. Now head back up the ramps and jump over to the platform and onto the new white platform and flick the switch to jump to another new platform. Leap onto the moving platform, head to the right and open the wall to reveal a room containing some crowns and chests. Use the moving platform to get to the other side and open the door back at the start by flicking a switch.

Leap over to the next ledge and jump onto the red save point, collecting the Health Potions and Blunderbuss Shot, then open the walls to the right to activate another switch. Head back over the platforms and turn the wheel to deactivate the flame traps. Flick the yellow lever to open the portcullis and collect the gold key before opening the chest for more items. Proceed to the gold portcullis and unlock it to leave via the lift.

pit three

Search the alcoves to collect some items, then kill the demon to open the curtain and find a skull. Enter through to a large room and destroy the priestesses. Pick up the Health and Antidote before standing on a block of stone by the right corner; press the square to raise it up, then leap onto another block to collect some more items. From the room entrance, go down the corridor and enter the wall opposite to activate a switch to deactivate a trap. From the chest, collect the Sword and Health Potions and then head up the stairs and walk down the corridor opposite you.

Open another wall to disable another trap and climb onto the red stone slab to hit a switch to unlock a door upstairs. Head back up the passage and enter the door on the right and kill the axe throwers. Grab the items before more creatures appear and attack. Go up the lift in the corner and flick a switch to open the passage at the end. To reveal secret extras, stand on the lighter-coloured block near the lift's position and press the Square to be drop to the area. Go to the end of the passageway and kill the axe throwers on your left, then go right down the corridor, past the trap with the spears, to pick up some Antidote. Activate the switch.

Go back to the junction and head off to the left, killing the priestess as you go. Continue forward, kill a second priestess and open the wall on the right to save your game. As you collect the Sword be careful of the trap. Proceed down through the corridors to kill some skeletons. Trying to gain access to the wall on the left unlocks a high priestess on the right; kill her to open the wall on the left, then flick the switch there to operate a lift at the top of the passage.



Proceed back up and ride to the upper section. Once you reach the top, collect the Antidote from around the corner, then walk up the back passage to the left until you reach the room with the pentagram. Pick up the Health Potion and return to the lift, leap across the gap to the alcove and open the wall on the left to kill the high priestess and save your game.

Ascend the wall at the back of the alcove to pick up a red key, then unlock the wall behind it to reveal some Antidotes. Leap back across then over to the other alcove on the left. Pick up the Sword and the red key, then use it to open the red gate to find two adjacent corridors. Go down the right passage first, avoiding the trapped tiles which release skeleton warriors. At the end, climb up to the left to discover an Antidote. Leap across the gap to the other side and defeat the two high priestesses. Go round the corner and jump over to the alcove to flick the switch. Doing this lowers the a platform from the ceiling. Jump onto it and lower it down to some nearby walls. Kill another two high priestesses then exit the level by heading down the new lift.

pit four

Be careful to avoid the loose rocks on the side ledge or you plummet to your death. Instead head through the gate to defeat the skeletons and collect the Silver Sword. Open the chest before killing more skeletons. Collect a Blunderbuss from the alcoves on the opposite side of the room. Proceed along the corridor, but keep close to the wall to drop down to the next section and kill the zombies before opening a chest. Try to avoid the trap close by. You also discover a switch that needs to be activated before heading up the left corridor to flick another lever to open a portcullis, freeing some skeletons and ghosts. Kill all these to gain a Silver Sword and a red key, then proceed through the portcullis to pick up a Health Potion and flick a grey switch. If you flick it again it activates a teleport, so use this to go back to the top.

Disable the sliding rocks trap with the red key and defeat the skeletons. Run past the trap to come into contact with more skeletons on your way down the steps to the golden archway. Go round to the left after entering the corridor and

unlock the chest to collect some Strength as well as a Warhammer, then activate the switch next to the mural on the wall to release two giant spiders. Kill these and go round the wooden door to pick up more items, including a gold key by the alcove. Get the lift down and then up again and leap over to the ledge and defeat the axe throwers and step forward onto the golden arches teleport to return back to the corridor close to your starting position. From here drop onto the new step and down to the ledge. Slash the axe thrower and open the wall.

Go round the corner to the lift and get a ride down, then defeat some more axe throwers and enter by the pit. Leap onto the ledge on the left and flick the switch to unlock a portcullis opposite as well as activating a lift from within the pit. Continue along the corridor to the ledge and stab the skeletons before opening the portcullis and heading off to the right. Now flick the yellow lever to move a platform. All the other switches are traps, so leave them.

Back outside, grab a ride on the platform to the opposite side and open the wall on the left of the skull to find Health Potions and Antidotes. On the ledge , drop down to the left and defeat the skeletons pouring out of the corridor then open a door. Go through the silver portcullis and collect Health and then go through the door and destroy the spider to collect the Antidote.

Proceed round the corner and enter through the portcullis to pick up the Silver Sword before activating a switch to open another portcullis. Now enter and collect the silver key and kill the spider, then go through the silver portcullis and back through the left door to collect some Health from the left corner of the room before opening the silver locked doors in the opposite corner. Enter and collect the Sword, then use it to defeat the ghosts. Proceed round to the left and flick the lever near the door. Head back the way you came, defeating axe throwers, until you reach the ledge. Descend left and into the stone lift to complete another level.

pit five

From the lift, drop down to the ledge on the right and go past the hidden door on the left to avoid the bolts. Go back and activate the door, then jump back slightly to avoid more bolts. Enter and flick the switch to open a gate, then go through and keep tight to the wall to avoid the spears. Open chest on the right to collect some Coins and a Fireball, then flick another switch. Head back down the corridor, but look out for the fireballs that shoot out.

Go through the newly-unlocked gate and avoid more fireballs. Open the chest for Health Potions. At the end of the corridor, pull the switch to open opposite wall and then flick another switch to unlock the final gate. Go through the last gate and open the wall at the end, then flick the lever to open an area outside. Exit and drop from the ledge to the new section on the right and kill the skeleton, then collect the Antidote from the left alcove and enter the back arches to kill the skeletons. Pick up the Health Potion from the alcoves at the back and open the wall on the left to collect a Rocket Launcher, then disappear through the door on the right. Open the wall in the middle alcove on the left and flick the lever to open the portcullis on the right, then defeat the skeletons and the spider before heading round to the right and up the ramp to the ledge. Before you jump onto the platform ahead of you, shoot the skeleton and then collect the silver key.

Go back to the ledge and drop down to another ledge on the right. Trigger the switch on the far end first, flick the nearest one, then leap onto the lift and use it to take you to ledge on the far left. Head round and descend down the steps to a corridor and save at the red skull. Pick up the items and trigger the switch to teleport. Now open the chest on the right to collect more items before flicking yet another switch. Leave via the door out to the ledge and enter the portcullis - kill the skeletons.

Rob the chest and enter through the final arch onto ledge and run past the flame traps. Descend to the right and open the end gully to discover a secret area, then step into the teleport to take you back to the top. Now run past the flames again and round the corner, but don't go down the passage onto the lift; instead turn to the right and leap over the sandstone block. Open the wall to discover another secret area; grab the items and head back to the lift to finish the level.

pit six

On leaving the lift you're on a series of ledges above a pit. This contains two pit monsters, but before you drop down collect the items on the top ledge. At the junction, go straight on and round the corridor for a chest holding Strength and Health Potions, then go back to the junction and go to the left and the sliding wall. Now turn right and run past another sliding wall to find some Anti-Magic Charms, but avoid being pushed off by another sliding wall if you proceed too far. Go back to the corner and turn to the right. Run past a moving wall and as you go collect Speed and proceed down corridor until you come to a switch. Flick this to open another wall, then run back past the sliding wall and back across the crossroads until you come to an open wall.

As you head round you come to an isolated ledge; leap across to a junction opposite and jump to the left to another passage to collect a Crown and flick a switch at the end. Return to the ledge and proceed over the junction into the opposite corridor and follow it to collect a Bomb Shot and other items. Back at the crossroads, turn to the right and into a room with a chest. Rob it, watching for fireball traps. Catch the lift down and meet the first pit monster. The best way to kill him is to run through the arch on the right, follow the corridor round and flick the switch to lower the pursuing creature into the flametraps.

After that, go through open passageway and at the end, collect Health Potions and save. Head back to the raised trap lift and open the wall on the right to discover a secret area containing a Red Sword and Arc of Power. Now head back to the main chamber and repeat the same procedure to kill the second pit monster. When the lift rises, collect the red key. With them both dead, explore all the corridors and alcoves as well as any secret rooms you encounter to collect extra items. Open the red portcullis, collect the Health and proceed up the ramps, kill the four-armed demon and flick the switch opposite the portcullis to open it. Enter and ride the lift up and prepare for the attacks. Kill the four-armed demon, then watch out for the Agrash throwing fireballs and flames at you. Climb up onto the ledges to open the walls to collect some items. Use the Red Sword to kill Agrash and the stone lifts to chase him when he uses the teleports. When he falls you finish the level.

belfry one

Drop down in the lift and flick the switch on the blank wall. The other switch is a flame trap. Catch the lift back up and over the drawbridge before it drops again. Defeat the knights in the corresponding room and drop down in this lift. At the bottom move fast to open the two chests and get back on the lift before the flame traps are activated. Back at the top, enter the next portcullis and run over bridge to tackle two knights. When you've killed them, the next portcullis opens. Proceed in and kill the knights and open the chest before going through the portcullis on the left, crossing yet another bridge and defeating another knight to gain access to another room.



Wipe out the knights and open the gate in the right corner to slaughter some more of the warriors then push the block in the corner to access a teleport to a secret area for a Venom Sword. Head down the lift and save, then go through the gate into the next room and hack down more knights before flicking a lever to unlock a portcullis. Exit through and head outside, go round the bend to the right and kill the spiders and enter the golden portcullis to collect a silver key. Go back into previous room and enter the four portcullis shaft, go up and pick up the red key. Head back across the bridge and open the portcullis to the right of the chest, then fight a knight to open the red gate and teleport out of the level.

belfry two

Go to the right to the pit and trigger the gold switch to activate a lift, then leap onto it and head up to pick up a Warding Spell. Come back down and go to the passage and open the end wall to discover a secret area. Come back past the pit and round the path with the pit creature chasing you. The path crumbles away, taking the pit monster with it.

Open the doors to the keep and kill the knights. As you approach the red switch you're attacked by a red knight. Flick the switch to open the doors, then exit into the courtyard. Go left, avoiding the War Pigs thrown from above, and then collect the War Pigs from behind the opening walls. Don't try to open the grey gates to reach the Ankh of Vitality - you will fall to your death. Head round to the right and open the wall to find a corridor with a red portcullis. Avoid the trap bolts and collect the items from the chest, then head through the red portcullis and kill the knights, avoiding the pit in the middle. Collect items from the chests and grab a ride up on the chequered lift and kill more knights. Opening the chests reveals more items including a Warhammer. Open the gate to come out on the battlements. Proceed along the battlement, avoiding the drop down, and go through some gates killing knights as you go. When you come to the portcullis, enter. You're in a room with a revolving platform in the middle. Leap onto it as it turns to the flat position and then leap to the ledge to flick a switch. Don't wait for the ledge to crumble; instead jump to another ledge, using the platform to reach it, and activating another switch. Now make a jump via the platform again to another ledge and head off to the right into a corridor and the exit via a red lift.

belfry three

Leap right and then right again to cross the rafters and reach the passage. At the end of the corridor go to round the bend for a Silver Sword. Cut down

the red knight behind you. Head back to the beams and cross over to the other side of room and the crumbling platform. Bomb Shots to your left are protected by flame traps, so go right, then left and right and kill the knight from behind the wall. Continue along the passage avoiding ghosts that appear beside the coffins. Pick up the Magic Warhammer, get the lift down and get ready to attack the green hand. Use the Warhammer or tempt it over the crumbling stones to defeat it.

Use the red lift to take you up to the next section and flick the switches behind the arches to open the portcullis and kill the knights. Flick another switch and collect the Health Potions and step up on new step, then turn round and leap over to the wheel and turn it to deactivate the flame traps. Now leap back to the path and proceed along and up until you come to a gold button. Press this, then head back to the original lift. When you get outside, open the gate opposite the red lift and kill the knights in the octagonal room, then unlock the right wall and defeat some more knights. Press the switch and head back to the demon picture hanging in the room and open to gain access to a passage behind. Follow this route and press the gold switch. Go to the courtyard and open the gate to the left, then avoid the spikes and ride the elevator up to collect a Ankh of Vitality. Drop back down and exit out and head left to the next gate. When you enter, kill the knights and open the wall on the left to find a secret Magic Warhammer. Go up the wall to the right and follow the passageway and climb the right wall again. At the top, kill the knights then follow the room round to the end. Go down the lift and leap over the crumbling stones just outside of the door, then go to the right and leave the level using the lift.

sewer one

Go right and climb up to the left near the green gunge, onto a rocky path. Follow it round and down to pick up a Bomb Shot, then use it to blow up the orcs in the room below. Head through the portcullis and kill the orc to collect a Health Potion in the alcove. Go back to the passage opposite and enter the maze area. Cut down another orc and collect the Bomb Shots to the left. To find the secret area, fall through the crumbling stones on the left by the wooden gates, but when you drop down all you will find is a teleport back to the top.

To get through the maze, hug the right wall all the way until you reach at a door flanked with banners. Enter the room and go through the doors opposite and take the lift up. Destroy the archer and collect the red key, but watch the archer firing at you through a window. Descend in the lift and go back through the maze and head to the portcullis on the left in the next room. Walk up the stairs to the start area. Now go over to the passage opposite and open the red door using the red key and shot the archers. In the next room, kill the archer then drop off the bridge to get the Bomb Shot and Grenade Launcher and open the door to go up the lift, taking you to another passageway with two archers. When they're dead, go back to the bridge and go to the right, to the lift and head up. At the top, follow the corridor along until you come out from the wall. Kill the orcs and the archers and collect the golden key. With this in your possession, go back to the start and enter through the gold gate using the key to open it and exit the level.

sewer two

Go into the octagonal room, which is actually a lift. Use it to drop down, then climb up to the right and proceed along the corridor, killing the orcs as you go. Find the Health Potion from the alcove, continue round the bend and then climb up to the stone ledge. As the door opens, kill the archers and pick up the Silver Sword before flicking both switches to unlock two portcullises either side of the level exit. To gain extra items, go down the right passage and defeat the two orcs freed by the portcullises being unlocked and go to the right for Health and left for a Fireball. Head down the main passage and kill the orcs as well as the sergeant at the junction, then collect the Blunderbuss shots from the alcove on the right, but drop down quickly to avoid the arrow trap. Now head back to the arch just outside of the switches room and climb up through and enter the doors on the right to arrive in the crypt. Open the middle-left coffin and collect the Silver Sword, then equip yourself with it to kill the ghosts. Look in other coffins to find items.



Exit the room and proceed along the right passage and down the two slopes before stabbing the two orcs at the bottom. Go to the right and straight over the next junction until you reach the portcullis. Open it and flick the switch to open the wall on the right, revealing a chest and an orc. Grab the Charms and return to the junction, then go to the left and enter a large chamber overrun by orcs and archers. Kill these then flick both switches to unlock the gate at the end of the level. Walk through and as you approach the next gate the floor crumbles away to complete another level.

sewer three

On dropping you land in a chamber of giant insects. As they hatch, defeat them and the purple forcefield drops. As you leave, go to the opposite wall for a Flamethrower and head out into the passageway. This time you're besieged by gold ants and red dragonflies; use your new weapon to burn them. Slide down the ramp and defeat the red ant to collect some much-needed items, then go down the right passageway to kill the gold ant. Now's a good time to save the game.

Slide down the slopes and open the opposite wall to discover a Blunderbuss and Ammo. Now go to the purple cavern and defeat the gold ants. When you've killed them the exit opens, so go through and head to the far side for some Health, then drop through the loose floor. Defeat another giant spider, then head to the right, push the wall on the left and open the pods to collect several items before returning to the junction. Take the fork to the left and climb the block you originally slid over and collect the Antidotes as well as killing another giant spider, then pick up the items in the secret area to the right. Go back to the passage and kill dragonflies as you progress to the circular walkway. Defeat the golden fly and retrieve the Rocket Launcher from the dead body. To kill the queen below, shoot the stalactites and make them drop on her. When she falls the sealed door opens and you can leave via the elevator.

sewer four

Enter the chamber and kill the two medusas before searching the section for Antidotes. Use your Anti-Magic spell to avoid being turned to stone by the green-haired medusa. Don't attack while her icy stare is homing in on you; instead hide behind something until the glare dies down. Kill her with the Blunderbuss or come up behind her and cut her head off. Two red portcullises open, leading to treasure rooms. Proceed back to the entrance and walk tight to the left wall to discover steps leading to a portcullis. Enter and unlock the three chests for items before exiting and going left while keeping close to the left wall and then running past the doors to come to another set of steps.

Ascend and go into the second treasure room and collect the items from the chests before opening the back wall to discover a secret area and more items. Now go back to the doors and go through to take the elevator up to the next section and kill the waiting orcs. Continue along the passage after you've killed the creatures and climb some more steps to kill the archers at the top, then go to the right and unlock the wall on the right. Go over to the pillar room and drop down to the right and flick the switch to open a portcullis situated back in the pillar room, but don't activate the switch on the other wall as it's a flame trap. Go back up into the room, defeat the orc and collect the weapons. Head through the newly-opened portcullis and proceed to the antechamber to kill the creatures and cause the shaman to appear. Use your Anti Magic to help get close to inflict damage with your sword, as using magic has little effect on him. Collect the Health after he's killed, then proceed through the exit and press the gold switch to finish the level.

trench one

Enter the portcullis, defeat the two ratmen and climb out the trench. Head round to the next trench avoiding the mines en route. When you drop down, defeat more ratmen to deactivate the two cannons on the top. Head back out and up to the next section and run to the next trench. Kill the next batch of ratmen and descend on the left lift and kill the rat ogre before opening the chest for Health Potions and a red key. Go back up the lift and drop down in the elevator on the right. At the bottom defeat more ratmen and open the wall opposite to find a secret area containing some extras.

Head right and defeat the rat ogres from the alcoves on the left and follow the passage round to the portcullises. Opening the right one activates a flametrap, so open the left one, grab the lift up and jump to the right to avoid the spikes when you get near the top. Ride the next lift to a ledge then kill the ratmen below with Bomb Shots before dropping onto the silver key. Defeat the ratmen in the foxholes near the wall, then descend down them to pick up some items. Climb out and progress forward killing ratmen in the turrets and avoiding the flametraps. When you kill the ratmen in the trench, collect the gold key left behind under the bridge, then head over to the ledge with the gravestones. You now see ratmen coming up the elevators, but you can't go down them yourself; instead open the gate and get the lift to the next level.

trench two

Stand on the lift, which is a teleport to a secret ledge with spells. Defeat the ratmen in the boxes before taking the lift up to the corridor. Go to the left and follow the corridor round and down the ramps and prepare yourself for the ambush by the ratmen that appear from the opening walls. When you get in the room, kill the rat ogre then proceed into the next corridor to defeat another ratman. Walk past the lift and head round to the junction. Kill more ratmen and save at the skull

before getting the lift at the end and going up. At the top you reach the command bunker, so press the gold switch to lower a wall outside, go back to the junction and go off to the left to exit the maze, leaping over the mine pit. Continue up the passage to the lift and go down, heading past the bunker and through the lowered wall to discover a control centre. Avoid the fire from the roof and kill the ratmen roaming about inside, then go to the back and up the step to drop in through the hole. Open the chest to collect more items and grab the lift down to complete the level.

trench three

Kill the rat ogre and flick all four levers to open the exit above the grey wall. Clamber up and collect items, then follow the corridor in either direction to come out in a large room. Step onto the wall and allow it to drop to the ground. You now come up against giant rats - both must be killed before you can open the red portcullises. To kill them, tempt them into the maze and over the crumbling floor traps activated by pulling the levers. To reach the room, walk tight to the right wall through the maze and enter the right passage. Go through the exit avoiding the ratmen's shots and open the opposite wall. Head up the ramp to the left or right and open the grey gate to kill the ratmen and collect a red key. With them killed, go through the red portcullis and collect the spells then kill the ratmen in there to open the gate to the rat king's chamber. You need to badger them into the larger connected room to give yourself more room to manoeuvre. Collect the health Potions and enter the opened gate, pressing the gold switch to complete another level.

inversion one

Head round the top and kill the ratmen to collect the Blunderbuss and Ammo. Get the central elevator down and save at the skull. Head through the portcullis and defeat more ratmen, picking up the Coins left behind. Shoot the barrels opposite the entrance to discover a chest containing Fireballs before killing the rat ogre. Open wall on the left of the wooden doors for an easier route, via a secret area with collectibles. Open the far wall to find the red key, then turn and proceed back to the area by the main wooden doors. Enter the red portcullis and head over the bridge, avoiding the grenades. Go through the wider portcullis for Health Potions and a Grenade Launcher, but don't enter the other portcullis or you fall down a trap. Flick the lever on the right to open a wall opposite. Defeat the rat musketeers and continue down the corridor, killing an ogre and some more ratmen, then ignore the first portcullis on the right and keep moving until you come to a T-junction. When you get there, flick the lever on the right to deactivate a trap, then head through the opening portcullis to collect a Grenade Launcher. Return back through the portcullis and leave the level by entering the one opposite.

inversion two

As you reach the first flametrap, set it off, wait until it dies and repeat this for the next two to reach the other side of the bridge. Enter the gate and go through the next set of doors, killing the two rat ogres before opening the chests. Behind the next door lies a small army of ratmen, who's numbers multiply as you kill them. Instead, run down the right corridor, ignoring the portcullises on the left, depositing bombs as you go and get through the next door. Defeat a further two ratmen and unlock the wall on the right to collect some secret items. Now go through the grey gate to get a ride up to the next section via the lift and go through the doors at the top. Open the wall on the left to reveal more items, but be ready for more creatures. Defeat them and go round to the right and a door opens to a coffin room. Open the coffin on the right to collect the items, then open the wall with the eyes on it and proceed, avoiding the spear trap, and pick up the Silver Sword before unlocking the chests for spells. Now return to the coffin room to kill the ghosts with the Silver Sword, opening the exit. Leave and go right over the bridge and open the gate to kill another rat creature. Descend on the lift and open a silver door to collect a Flamelance, but get back out of the room quickly to avoid the loose floor. Enter the middle door and kill two more rat ogres, then exit the left door to collect more items and the level end.

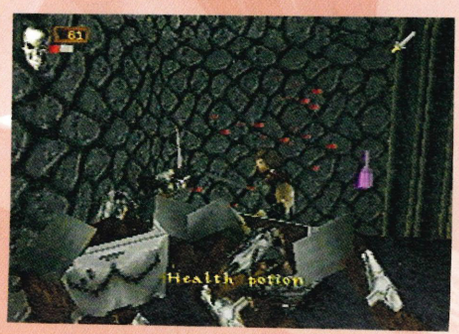
inversion three

Kill the rat musketeers through the door after crossing the bridge, then enter the portcullis and kill some more creatures. Where you are stood there are four secret doors, but the two on the left contain only more ratmen, so open the right wall and defeat the ratmen and musketeers before flicking a switch and killing the ratman from the opening wall behind. Leave the room and open the secret door to enter the room where the musketeer was and defeat more ratmen. Flick another lever to unlock gate at the far end. Walk through it, get the elevator up and head through the door on the left. Open the portcullis on the right and go left to find some items in the chest as well as a gold key, but look out for the imp in the boot who tries to kick you out of the window.

Return to the save point you passed by opening the left wall, then go down the right corridor, avoiding the crumbling floor, to the lift. Ascend and enter a large room. Go over to the middle alcove to collect a Starspell and Warding, but be quick to kill the rat musketeers behind you and the ratmen on the left. Go through the gold portcullis for a secret room with chests and coffins. Don't open the middle coffin - it contains a ghost. Head back to the large room and go through the double doors to kill yet more rat creatures. Go through the gate and cross the bridge to open another gate and finish the level.

inversion four

Go left and kill the ratmen, collect items and return. Go round the other side and kill more rat rogues, then flick the switch and grab a ride down to pick up Flamethrower Ammo in the room ahead. Continue through the opening gate onto a bridge and save. drop down off the bridge to left to land on another bridge with items. Teleport back up. Go through the door at the end of the bridge and defeat more ratmen. For a secret chest, go to the end of the passage on the left, but be prepared to attack a horde of ghosts. Go back round and past the entrance, but avoid the fake teleporter trap. Instead go round past the lift until you come to two locked portcullises. Open the wall between them to find another lift and ride up to another corridor and round to a portcullis. Pass through and pull the lever on the right to open the next set of doors Open the door with one torch above it



and flick the switch, then go to the door with two torches to flick another switch, then run over the crumbling floor through the door with the three overhead torches. Go to the next door and follow the corridor along until you reach the teleport. Step inside and collect the gold key at the other end, before exiting through the portcullis and enter the one opposite to collect weapons and spells. Go round to the lift and descend, go through the gold portcullis and the preceding one for a chest. Head back to the lift and enter through another gold portcullis and run to the left, round the outside and past the two monsters to open the wooden door to finish the level.

inversion five

Look for a chalk mark by the junction on the bridge. Drop off there for a secret platform with items. Press Square to get back to the bridge. Now go through the normal portcullis and use your Invisibility to kill the rat ogres. Flick the lever in the right pillar to disable the crumbling floor under the gold key. Open the portcullis to reach the key and open the wall on the right, opposite the entrance. Proceed down the corridor and open the gold portcullis on the right. Open the next portcullis and kill the ratmen behind you. The portcullis nearby opens and leads to more ratmen and items. Flick the gold switch, head back to the bridge and go through the gold portcullis. Open the chests before stepping onto the lift and flicking the lever to travel up. At the top, shoot the four rat grenadiers in the alcoves and flick the switches, but be quick as they're on timers. You open the portcullises allowing you to collect the red key. Go back down the lift and open the red portcullis to leave.

inversion six

Go to the end of the bridge and drop onto the turtle's back. Ride into the room and shoot the ratmen. Leap off and open the gate on the left, but step to one side to avoid the ratman and ogre that appear. Then reopen the gate and collect items, then go back to the room and activate the banner to teleport you to the bottom of the pit for a secret area. Teleport back out and go through the corridors and round the corner to find some more ratmen. Pick up the items on the shelf and go through the doors to activate the banner on the right to open a secret chest. Head round the corner and through the doors and kill the two rat ogres. Open the wall on the left at the end of the passage to come back out on original landing, then head down the corridor to save your game, before coming back up and activating the banner to open the doors. Go through to complete the level.

inversion seven

Drop from the middle bridge for a Warding Spell on the lower bridge, then teleport back up. Head through the gate at the end and go up the bridge to the right to save. Don't go through the gate - you drop down into the robots' arena. Instead activate the two levers and quickly head off left to walk into a teleport. At the other end, make a dash for it to avoid the flames from the robot in the window, open the gate and step onto the turtle and ride it along until it stops at the ledge with the open gate. Proceed through the gate and open the wall on the right, following this route along, through another portcullis to pick up some Bomb Shots. Go through the open wall and head round the corridor to pick up some more items. Flick the switch and leave through the doors and step onto the teleport. Now collect items from the ledge and throw the Grenades into the open doorways to defeat the robots below, then drop down and head through the gate and open the

right coffin for Rocket Launcher Shots. Defeat the ghosts and pick up items before teleporting again. Go through the gate and open the wall on the right for another secret compartment, then head round the corridor and through the wooden door to complete the level.

Inversion Eight

Drop down from the middle bridge to collect a Health Potion and teleport back up. Use your shooting weapons to destroy the flaming robot at the other end of the bridge. Once he's dead, go through the gate and shoot the two grenadiers on the ledges, then go down in the lift and kill the two rat ogres before collecting the items out of the chests, but be careful of the robots. When the red lift in the centre starts to descend, go back up in the lift and at the top and flick the switch for it to drop down again without you. A giant robot appears and the safest way to defeat him is to drop Bombs, Grenades or War Pigs from above to destroy it. When he's dead, the red lift starts to descend, so run over to it and get down quickly or you fall to your death. Ahead is the turtle waiting to give you a ride out of the level.

Inversion Nine

As the turtle carries you along, shoot the ratmen and the flaming robots in the bunkers as well as other turtles. When the second turtle rider falls, leap over and claim his mount as the words 'watch out' appear on the screen. Shoot more ratmen and robots and the two turtle riders from the sides. When the turtle reaches the ledge, leap off and save your game. To get the two secrets you must react quickly, so follow the path along to a large room and run to the left to drop down in the lift shaft to find some goodies. When you teleport back up, turn to your right and run into the second lift shaft to find more items. Destroy the two robots to collect even more items in the corners and go back and save again. The two giant robots can be defeated if you stand in the corridor and shoot them, because they're too big to follow you.

You now need to go back into the large room to make two giant scorpion robots appear. Deal with these by again retreating into the corridors and firing from a safe distance. When they're dead explore the area to collect items you missed before leaving the level via the lift in the far-right corner.

Dragon One

Enter the large room and kill the knights. On the right next to the corridor and opposite the entrance you see a hidden door. Open and enter to kill more knights before opening another wall and stepping to one side to avoid the flame trap. When it dies down, flick the switch and save at the skull, then as you go back into the main room look out for the flame trap on the left. Slay another batch of knights and take the elevator in the middle down. At the bottom, don't flick the switch on the wall to deactivate the flames as it also sets up an even deadlier trap for when you enter the room. Instead just run through the flames and take a small amount of damage. Pick up the items, including a Venom Sword, and open the chests before heading back up in the lift. In the main room again, open the wall on the left of the portcullis exit, avoiding the arrows. Use Grenades to kill the knights and enter to flick the gold lever. Go into the main room and out through the opened portcullis. Kill more knights and collect the gold key to open the gold portcullis. Grab the lift up to come face to face with the dragon. Use Venom Sword after casting Strength then Warding. Get in close and strike the dragon's forehead. When he's dead go through the two portcullises to open chests, then come out and go to the stairs on the far side of the cave. Don't descend into the pit. Instead, kill the knights in the next room and head for the elevator down to finish this level.

Dragon Two

Go through the portcullis and drop down in the lift, then go to the back pillar on the left in the big room and flick the switch, but leave the others - they summon high priestesses. Now go to the right-hand side of the room and find Rocket Launcher Shots and flick the gold switch there before returning back to the main part of the room. Get the elevator up and flick the switch at the top to open the door. Now head back down and go into the passage, behind the other portcullis and proceed through the opened door before it closes. You are now attacked by a group of high priestesses in the walkways above the dragon's arena. Defeat them then flick the four levers to deactivate the four teleports surrounding the main central lever. Flick the switch to open a door at the far end of the arena. Climb down and head for the door and flick all six golden switches as you go. In the room, collect the items from the chests and the secret area behind the wall and the Red Sword from the portcullis. Use the sword to defeat the dragon. Cast Warding to get in close and strike at its three heads, avoiding the flames from the middle head. When you defeat him, head through the door and step on the teleport to take you to a ledge. Go through the doors and drop from the level in the lift.

Dragon Three

Head through the corridor and enter the large arena. Run along to the right and open the gate onto the lift, avoiding the fire breath of the purple dragon. To kill him, collect the Black Spirit Sword. On the lift, go up twice to reach the passage and flick the lever near to the lift door to open a door back in the lift shaft. Head in there and collect the Flamelance, then flick the switch and leap to the left to avoid a bolt trap. Turn around and pull the newly-revealed gold switch. Head back to the walkway and turn right, open the next gate to pick up more items, then flick another lever to gain access to a second gold switch. The purple floor now crumbles away and drops you to ground level. Go north and all the way up in the elevator and pull a gold switch at the back of the lift shaft. Pick up a Warding spell. Get the lift back down and go to the top right-hand corner and flick a switch to get a red lift up for a Flamelance.

Come back down and head over to the top left-hand side to flick another switch and open the wall. This allows you to take the red lift up to find a Ankh of Vitality as well as flicking yet another switch to open the third gold switch. Go back down and head to the main arena. Once in there, go through the gate and up another lift to the middle level. Pick up the Ankh and activate the gold switch at the back of the lift shaft. This raises the Black Spirit Sword. Take the elevator to the top and collect the Sword from the middle of the walkways. Go back to the middle section and use the cannons to shoot fireballs at the dragon. When you run out of ammo, go to the top level and wait until he rises above you, then strike at his head. Keep repeating this until he falls, then come back down and exit through the portcullis at the back of the north lift shaft.

Dragon Four

This is your greatest foe. He follows you in attempt to fry you if you stand still too long, so keep moving at all times. Go forward from the lift and flick the switch on the left wall. Sprint round the higher passage, avoiding the falling masonry, until you come to two switches. Flick the lower one and head back along the passage, past the elevator. Keep going and you find a silver key. Retrace your steps and pull the top lever, using the key to open the wall to the right. Head through and past the portcullis into the lift and take it down. At the bottom, leap over the lighter-coloured slabs to avoid falling to your death and enter the next room. As you go through a wall closes and you need a gold key to open it again. Flick the lever under the block and stay there. Two slabs crash down, so then climb up on the one that stays there and pull the next switch to unlock a portcullis and a gate. Go through the portcullis and flick the lever on the right to deactivate the trap and flick the other switch to open the wall and enter through to collect a Speed item. Pull another lever in the room to lower some slabs back outside, but there's a trap on them - avoid it, clambering up at the right end of the slab in the middle of the room and then leap back to avoid the sliding block. Now wait until the second slab has slid across and climb up the high slab to collect the Flamelance.

Flick the lever to open the other hidden door in the red room, then climb down and go through to collect more items for the battle as well as a Gold key. Outside, open the wall using the gold key and enter to pick up the Anti-Magic Charm and cause two slabs to crumble. Leap over the pits and head through the gate to get back to the main arena.

The main arena has four main sections; three walkways (you're on the middle one) and a platform in the middle where the dragon perches. All are connected by a series of teleports. You can also get under the platform to collect items. On the bottom passage, collect the red key and go through the corresponding door. Go down the passage and into a room with raised sides. You see a red sword over the pit ahead, but trying to leap over results in you being fried by lightning bolts. Climb up to the left and open the hidden door and leap to the right to avoid the trap. Flick the switch inside to open the next hidden door on the far end of the other ledge. Move fast to get there as it's on a timer. When you get inside, collect the next batch of items and flick the next switch to reveal the third hidden door. Go to this room and the door shuts and the flametraps start, so use an Charm of Icy Cool to help you survive. The floor descends and you're given a limited amount of time before the floor raises and resets the trap. Now run to the next door with the timer running, avoid the fireballs and get inside to flick the final lever to lower the wall and make the lightning trap safe. You can now collect more items including the much-needed Red Sword. Head back to the middle passage and use your Flamelance to shoot Melkor. After a while he perches on the platform. Arm yourself with Strength and Warding as well as a Charm of Icy Cool before leaping across to him. Strike him with your sword. Repeat this procedure until you've finished him off and completed the game.



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As stocks are understandably limited, the quicker you are the better, so get pasting. If you're too small to handle sharp cutting objects or possibly narcotic paper glue, then get a responsible adult to assist. Just don't bother them too much, OK? We're bound to get the blame...

ocean

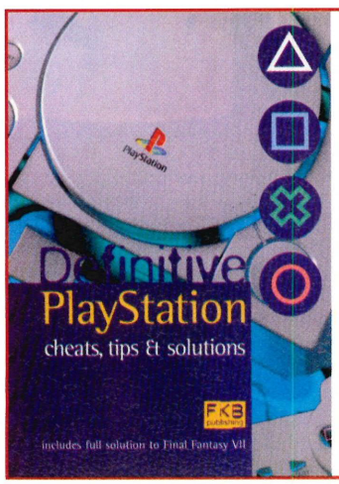
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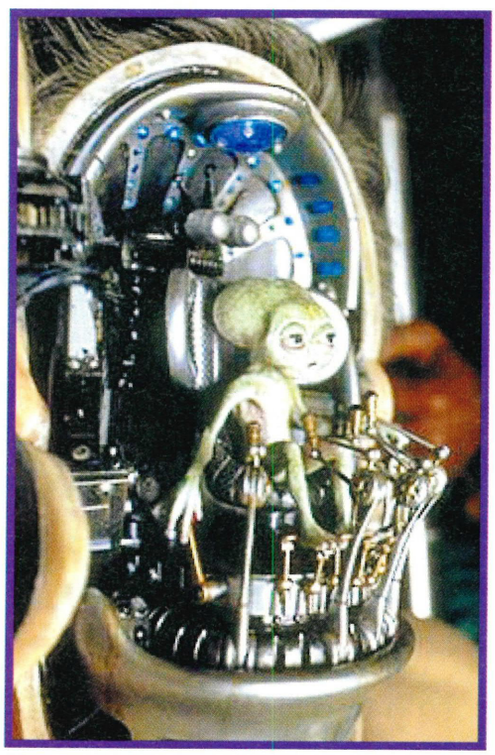
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MEN IN BLACK

With Gremlin's Men in Black PlayStation game hotting up, it's time we took a look at the movie, released to own on video this month.

On a routine investigation, Men in Black operative Agent K (Tommy Lee Jones) meets a New York police officer (Will Smith) who he recruits into his elite and secretive organisation, which monitors hostile extra-terrestrial activity - 'protecting the Earth from the scum of the universe'. While investigating a series of unauthorised close encounters (hmmm... how can an alien encounter be 'authorised'?), Agent K teams up with his new recruit Agent J and uncovers a deadly plot by an intergalactic terrorist to assassinate two ambassadors from opposing galaxies currently residing (secretly!) in New York. If they die, our humble planet will become the focus for an intergalactic war.

Men in Black was a huge hit at the box office, and looks like being a big success on video too. It's out now, and costs £15.99.

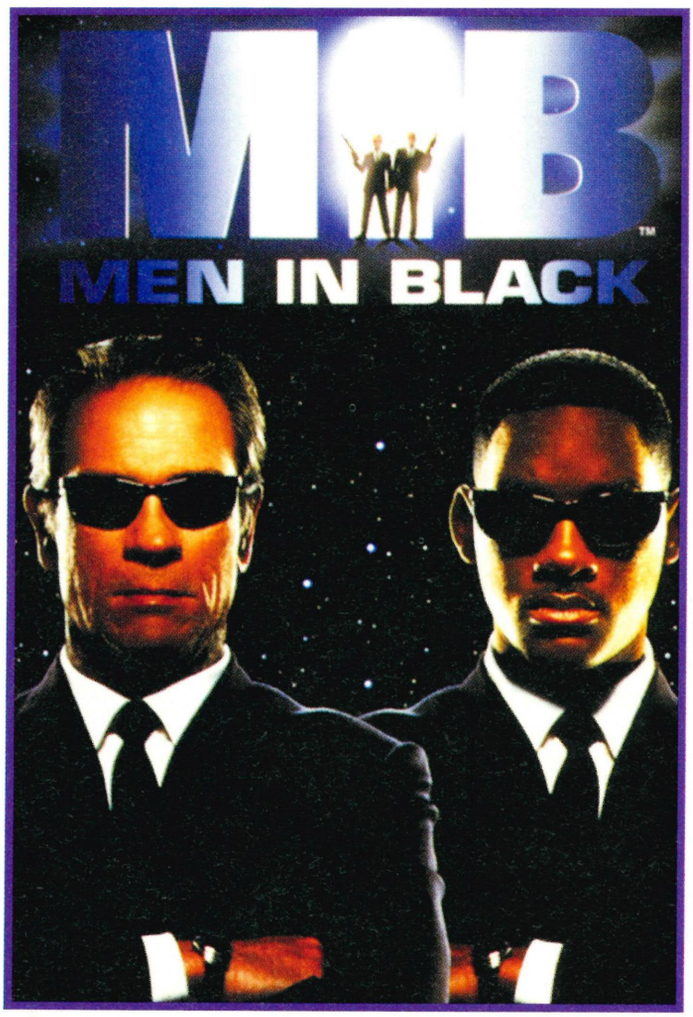


COMPETITION

Whadayaknow? We've got five copies of the MIB video and also the CD soundtrack to give away. Want one? Answer this simple question, and you're in the draw...

▸ WHO STARS IN THE FILM AS AGENT K?

Answers on a postcard to MEN IN BLAG COMPETITION at the competition address.









MUSIC

Trance freaks and tie-dye aficionados are in for a treat with the release of **JOURNEYS INTO TRANCE** on **DCI**. This two-CD compilation is mixed by infamous trance and Goa DJ **Sid Shanti**, and it provides a history of the UK trance scene from 1995. With tracks by **Prana, Doof, Disco Volante** and **Astral Projection, Journeys into Trance** offers the perfect backdrop for clubs, home, car and Far-Eastern beaches... On a totally different note, we've got **MASTERDANCETONE-HOUSE MUSIC MOVEMENT** mixed by the one and only, **ROGER SANCHEZ**. This man has a god-like status among house music fans, and you can see why after listening to this mix. He segues everything from Garage through to House and techno in a never-boring fashion. Tracks by **Green Velvet, Thomas Bangalter** and the **S-Men** stand out among a selection of quality tunes... Top Euro DJ **SVEN VATH** is back with a new album after his so-so last effort, **The Harlequin, The Robot and The Ballet Dancer**. His return may fox a few of you, but it's a diverse collection that doesn't concentrate on his infamous Euro Techno DJ style of old. Definitely worth a listen... SVEN VATH'S old label has finally shut down after producing for some of the world's best dance tunes of the Nineties. Not to worry, though, because the **HARTHOUSE RETROSPECTIVE 1-4** offers up some of the defining moments of the said label and its sister label **EYE Q**. If you don't already own any Harthouse compilations or twelves, this Retrospective cannot be missed... If you're looking to see if you've won the **High Octane** competition from last month, don't worry, we'll be printing the winners names in Issue Six.

TAMAGOTCHI ANGEL

Ever wondered where Tamagotchis go when they die? They go to virtual heaven as angels, where they live among the clouds, watching their human friends down below on Earth. With Bandai's new Tamagotchi Angel, you can get one of these deceased cyberpets to visit you.

A Tamagotchi Angel descends to Earth in a space ship. When it lands you must look after it. Feed it when it's hungry, clean up when it soils the floor and tend to it if sick. When the Angel prays for you, ring a bell to thank it. To keep it fit (as shown by filled hearts on the Effort screen), play a game where you jump over stars.

Tamagotchi Angels grow into new, exciting characters - the angel you get depends on how well you treat it. The graphics are similar to earlier Tamas, but aren't as cool as DigiMon's. Angel Tamas change quicker and more often than previous models, so it's ideal for the young or impatient. A neat new feature is the motion sensor built into the unit. You feed your angel candy to improve its Angel Power, but occasionally a big black bat tries to steal it. Shaking the Tama scares away the bat. Feeding it too many sweets makes it ill, though, as does turning out the lights when it's awake.

Tamagotchi Angel is great fun. Just ask nine-year-old Robyn Dalzell, Dorset's biggest cyberpet fan: "I like Tamagotchi Angel, but prefer the DigiMon. It's quite annoying that Angels die too easily, but it looks great when it eats. I like it when they come down from heaven on a space ship, but they take a while".



Like all Tamagotchis, this one hails from Japan and costs £10.99 in the UK.

COMPETITION!

Want to win a Tamagotchi Angel? We've ten of them to give away! To be in with a chance, answer the following question:

▸ FROM WHICH COUNTRY DID THE TAMAGOTCHI CRAZE ORIGINATE?

Answers on a postcard to, HARK, THE HERALD ANGELS COMPO at the competition address.

FLIX

You either love anime Manga vids or you completely and utterly loathe them, but for those who find the wacky Jap toons the mutz nutz, here's a quickie look at their newest UK release, Sword of Truth.

The story is based around ancient Japan. The country is ruled by clans of feuding Shoguns, but a master swordsman called Shuranosuke walks alone and is unafraid, bearing his distinctive 'Scythes of Death' crest. He's hired by the Tokugawa Shogunate to rescue the princess Mayu from the grasps of a group of bandit ninjas, the Seki Ninja. They will stop at nothing to thwart him from accomplishing his task, and summon the undead spirits of Seki Ninjas in Hell to aid them.

As Shuranosuke is pretty handy with his blade, the film boasts plenty of blood and guts. There's a decapitation nearly every two minutes, limbs flying like confetti, and even and flew ninjas cut completely in half - vertical and horizontal. The film comes with an '18' rating, not just because of the violence, but also due to a few sex scenes although they're very soft. There's also a few drug references, mainly to opium, but this was used by ninjas to brainwash hostages and so forth, and not for pleasure.

Overall it's a pretty good movie, but not one of the best in the series. It's only 60 minutes long, so you haven't time to get bored of the violence and to realise the storyline's a little weak. Droves of fans will buy this whatever, but if you want to see what the Manga fuss is all about try Ninja Scroll.

COMPETITION

If you're over 18 and you would like to win a copy of Sword Of Truth, extreme PlayStation has five to give away. To win, answer this brainteaser:

• Which Manga film has recently been programmed into a PlayStation videogame (clue: It's been reviewed in this very issue)?

A: GHOST IN THE SHELL
B: GHOST IN A SHELL SUIT
C: HOLD UP AT A SHELL GARAGE
D: SHELL SUIT GARAGE HOLD UP

Plonk your name, address, answer and age on a postcard and send it to DON'T LOOK BACK IN MANGA COMPETITION at the competition address.

*REMEMBER you must be over eighteen to enter the compo: IT IS ILLEGAL TO FALSIFY YOUR AGE



WORLD CUP TRIVIAL PURSUIT



Q: What was the name of Bobby Moore's Cat?
A: Pelé.

If you knew that already, you're sure to score with Parker's new World Cup Trivial Pursuit. Featuring 1,800 questions and answers, this officially licensed World Cup product is the latest addition to the already-overflowing Trivial Pursuits stable.

Fans of the original game will be right at home with World Cup Trivial Pursuit. Each player moves around the board, earning another turn if he can correctly answer questions in one of six categories, depending on the colour of the space on which he lands. These are The World of Soccer, Players & Personalities, History of Football, Road to the Cup, Off the Pitch and Free Kick. You can move around the wheel-shaped playing area any way you like, so aim for your fave category as much as possible. There are also six 'wedge' spaces around the board, one for each of the above categories. Land on one of these and answer the relevant question and you win a wedge. Grab all six and move to the centre to win the game.

World Cup Trivial Pursuit costs £24.99, and is a must for footballing trivia fans.

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Published by
Quay Magazine Publishing Ltd
Jade Manor Court
West Quay Road
Poole
Dorset
BH15 1JF

Tel: (01202) 679000
Fax: (01202) 679002

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Subscriptions & back issues
The subscription rate for 13 issues is £26 (UK), £35 (EU) & £65 (World)
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Distributed by
Seymour Distribution

Cover artwork supplied by
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Thanx & Respect to:
Pete Devery @ Sony Computer Entertainment
Nathan Wilson @ Ocean
Suzie Hamilton @ Core Design
Steven McKevitt, Martin Bramall @ Gremlin Interactive
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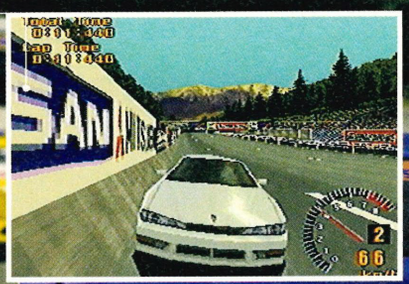
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ISSUE SIX

Gran Turismo

On import it's had the PlayStation world buzzing for quite a while now, but at last we've got our greasy mitts on a finished PAL version. Included in the review will be the first play of Sony's new Dual Shock Analog Pad. Good vibrations!



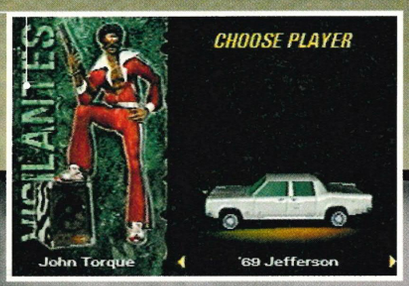
Parasite Eve

SquareSoft's new epic is upon us. It's a cross between Resident Evil 2 and Final Fantasy VII, and looks set to blow them both away. Available on import, full review in our import section next issue.



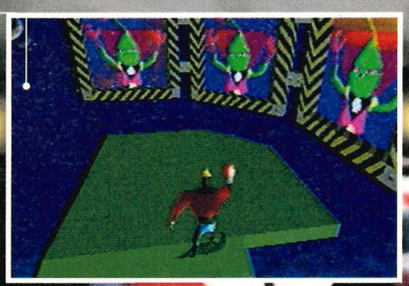
Vigilante 8

Activision's combat racer is looking the biz. Plenty of cars with weapons, churning up dust; luv it! You guessed it, reviewed here!



Blasto

Sony's answer to the 3D platformer comes in the form of muscle-bound, blonde-quiffed, weak-kneed Captain Blasto. Look to the skies for extreme's earth-shattering insight.



Bust-A-Move Rhythm and Dance

Move over Parappa, let's dance. We've briefly mentioned this in our overseas page (Issue Four), and featured it in 'This is a Journey into Sound' this issue, but it's so addictive we can't wait for the PAL version to review it. This will be head-spinning into the import section of Issue Six.



Also reviewed

Sentinel Returns, adidas Power Soccer '98, Blast Radius, Vs, WCW Nitro, Atari Greatest Hits 2 & more

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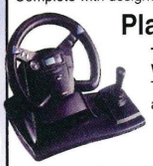
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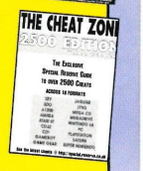


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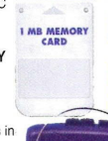
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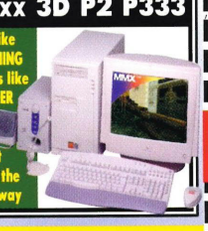
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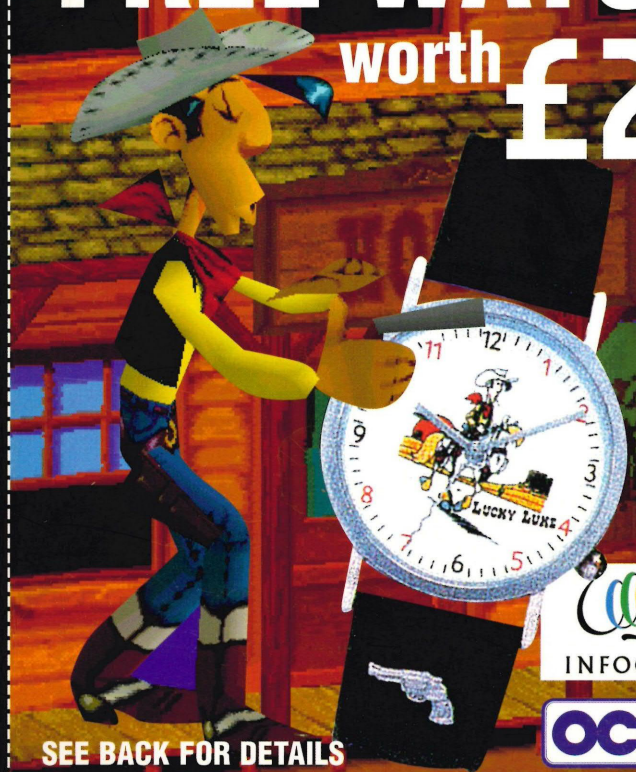
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